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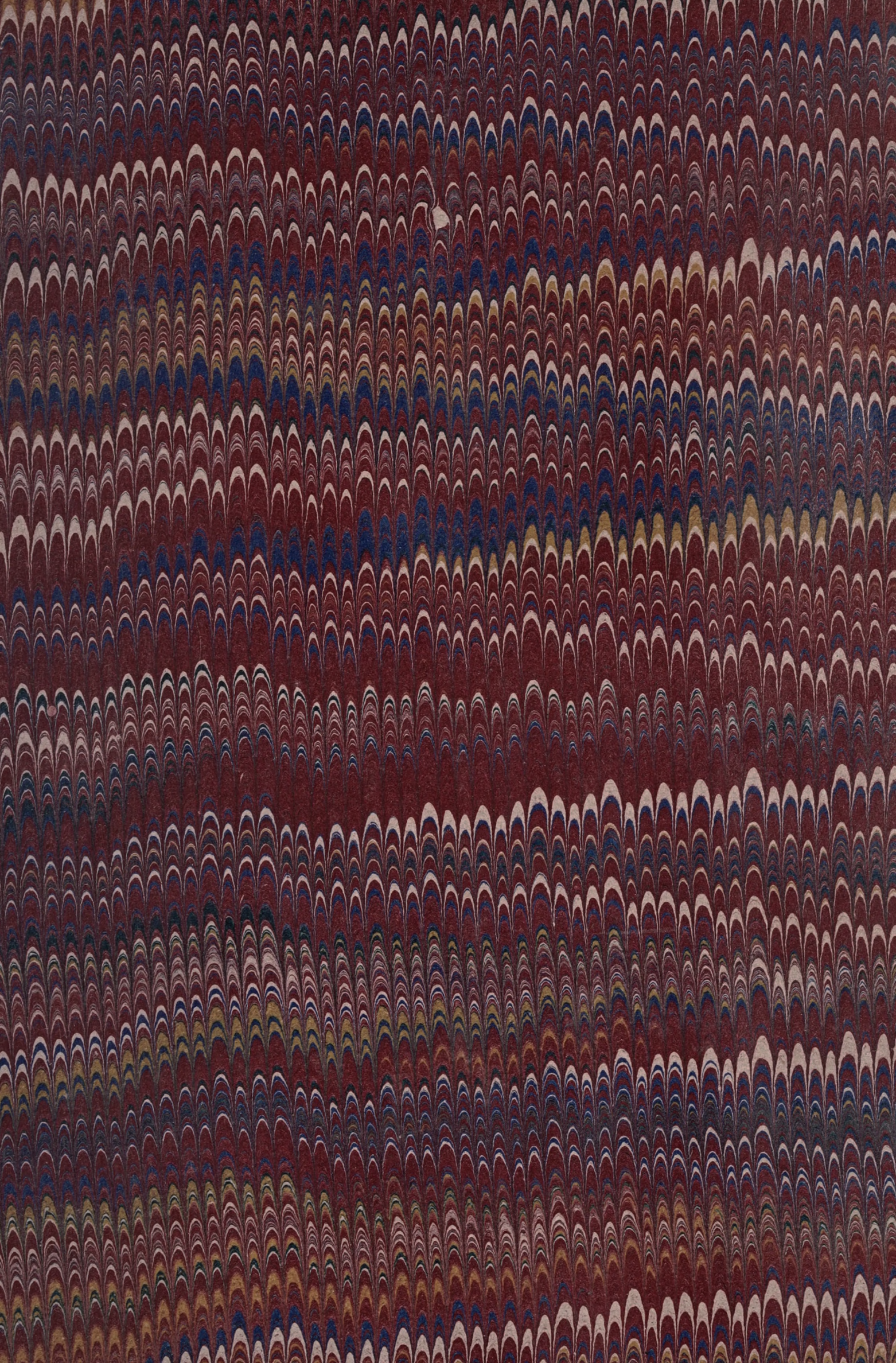
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



SIX SINNERS

OR

SCHOOL DAYS IN BANTAM VALLEY

BY

CAMPBELL WHEATON

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SIX SINNERS.

CHAPTER I.

HAPS AND MISHAPS.

"DODY! Dora! Dody! Theodora! Oh, Dody, where are you?"

Jack was almost ready to cry. Half an hour's steady hunting, down in the meadow, under the buttonwood trees by the mill-brook, all over the house, of course, and now from bottom to top, and top to bottom again of the old barn. "She wasn't in the wood-house chamber, and I know she didn't go off to play with any of the girls. I believe she's climbed a tree and hid. D*oo*ra! I know something awful, and you'd better believe I won't tell you a word if you don't come out quick."

"I don't believe it," said a voice from afar. "You're always pretending. What is it?"

"Come out," repeated Jack, severely.

"I can't come out till I come down, and I can't *get* down, Jack; I'm stuck."

"Stuck *where?*" roared Jack, dancing with impatience. "I've been everywhere for you, and you wasn't stuck there, else I should a seen you."

"In the wood-house roof, and it *pinches*," squealed Dora, just the hint of a cry making itself heard. "Come up through the butternut-room."

"In the wood-house roof!" repeated Jack, mechanically, running his hands to the bottom of his pockets, and beginning to walk slowly toward the wood-house. "I never heard of such a girl. You ought to stick awhile, just to pay you for cutting up so. I've a great mind to let you."

Yet, as Jack threatened, he climbed up the ladder leading from the tool-room to the butternut-room. There were no windows, only two round openings at each end, and, for a moment, he could see nothing. Then a pair of boots waving wildly to and fro became visible, and he made toward them.

"Drop, and I'll catch you. What did you try to wiggle through there for?"

"I can't drop," said Dora. "There's a board sprung or something, and all of my dress, and some of my arm's caught in it. You'll have to push it back, Jack."

Jack mounted a block of wood used by Dora in her progress, and felt about till the loose board was found. All his strength could hardly move it, but with a grand jerk it presently flew back, and Dora half fell, half jumped to the floor, sending a regiment of butternuts flying. Jack sat down on the barrel and looked for a minute, without a word. Then he began:

"Dora Maynard, I'd like to know if there aren't places enough to play in, without your squeezing yourself to death getting up a place there couldn't any thing but a squirrel get through? What did you want out on the roof?"

"I didn't want anything," Dora said, plaintively, picking cobwebs out of her hair and eyes. "But, Jack, there's some little squirrels in there, I know, right between that board and the shingles. The old squirrels were getting butternuts, and they scolded and flew around so, I knew there was

something; and I'm pretty sure I saw 'em, only I got caught trying to put my arm in. See how black it is. I guess you'd say it hurt if you had it."

"May be I would, and may be I wouldn't," said the young gentleman, pretending scorn, but really looking with some anxiety at the black and blue mark covering half her arm. "You run in and have grandma put some opodeldoc on it, and I'll feel round for the squirrels."

Suiting the action to the word, Jack arose, and began cautiously feeling around, but as his arm went farther in, withdrew it suddenly, with a howl echoed by Dora, who clasped him around the legs and held him there.

"Let go!" roared Jack. "Can't you let a feller alone. I'm bit, awful! Now the blood's running all down your apron. Tie me up, can't you?"

"I most always do have a rag so's to tie myself up," said Dora, forgetting her arm, and turning her pocket inside out. There was everything but a rag, and Dora at last tore her handkerchief in two, and bound up the streaming finger. "I guess we'll both go in to grandma," she said.

"You'd better not, yet awhile; she and grandpa are talking about you. I heard 'em."

"About me? I haven't done anything—today," Dora added, remembering that in past days she had done enough to supply conversation for a century.

"Grandma's crying, too," Jack went on; "and they've got a great long letter from New York, and I heard her say, 'I don't know what will become of the child among strangers.' Dody, I do believe they're going to send you to school."

"I won't go," said Dora, shutting her teeth hard. "Nobody's any right to take me away from here."

"Yes they have, too," Jack said, nursing his finger. "Your father can send you just where he's a mind to. The letter's from him, I know, because I heard grandpa read, 'yours truly, H. H. Maynard.'"

"You're a mean thing, any way, to listen so," burst out Dora. "I don't want to hear about your hateful old letters. I won't go to school. I'm glad you did get bit. O-o-o-o-h!" and, in a passion of tears, Dora cast herself down among the butternuts and wailed till Jack, at first indig-

nant, cooled off, and came down from his perch to comfort her.

"Now, Dody, what's the use? You know you've got to go if the letter says so. I'll pick out a whole bag of butternut-meats for you, and I'll pop all my corn, too; and, Dody, we'll write letters. I'll tell you everything, and if I do get one o' the squirrels, I'll tame it, and have it all ready when you come home."

"But I don't want to go away from you, Jack, or any of 'em," Dora moaned, rubbing her cheek against his, till there was a mutual interchange of cobwebs, dust, and tears.

"Come down, you two chilluns," sounded old Dilly's voice from below. "Your granther wants you. He says, 'Come right away.' Merciful man! now who could a told that caliker was ever clean?" she went on, as, after a minute of silence, Dora and Jack came down the ladder. "Tubs wouldn't hold all the clothes you spile, and chains wouldn't keep you out o' mischief every blessed minnit you're awake. It's a mercy there ain't any more o' ye."

Dilly grumbled all the way back to the kitchen, but ended with a chuckle as Dora passed her with

a little nip at her great arms, and went into the room opening out from the bedroom, and called office or library, just as it happened. Grandpa sat in his big chair, and grandma on the sofa, had her knitting, and tried to look just as usual, though she turned away her head and looked out of the window for some time when the two came in. Dora sat down in her own rush-bottomed arm-chair, and looked at Mr. Winthrop without speaking.

"Well, Dody," he said, cheerfully, "here's news for you. A long letter from father, and he says he has found just the right place for you. A private school where there are only eight little girls about your own age, and two or three older ones. It is in a country town, and there's plenty of ground about it, so you will have almost as much freedom as here. Dody, why Dody!"

Dora had listened quietly for a moment, but, as he went on, first one tear and then another stole down, till a whole procession chased over the bridge of her nose, and with a great sob, she fled to grandma, and buried her head in the sofa cushions. "I shan't go. You needn't tell me a word about it; I don't want to go to school.

Oh, grandpa! don't you know enough to teach me?"

"No, my dear, I don't believe I do," said grandpa, half laughing and half ready to cry himself, as Dora raised her appealing face. "Not, at any rate, all that your father wants you to learn. You were such a frail little thing we have let you run wild a good deal, to strengthen you, and your father thinks you will be past training, unless you have a few more rules to keep you straight. They are all good ones; very good ones," he added hastily, as Dora's face took on a defiant look which boded ill for the keeping of these rules. "And if you are good, you will come back to us in the long vacations; six weeks in the spring, and six in the fall. Three whole months at home, Dora, if you can only remember to be good."

"What if I don't?" Dora choked.

"Then you are to stay right on. But, Dora, I know you will be good. You want to learn so many things, and have never been content to go to school here. Then, you're ten years old, and what a little while it will take to make a young lady."

"I don't want to be a young lady," sighed Dora, "I hate 'em. Must I soon, grandpa?"

"In three or four weeks, so you have plenty of time to get ready for it. Have you cut yourself, dear? Where did all that blood come from?"

"O, that's Jack!" said Dora to whom the three or four weeks seemed endless, and who felt like a reprieved criminal. "This is what I did to myself, and I want some opodeldoc on it, grandma."

"The sleeve is badly torn," said grandma, after her pity and wonder were over, and the arm had been bathed. "Dora, what shall I do to make you more careful? I don't know who there'll be to sew you up when you get away. Now I think you must mend this sleeve yourself, just to learn."

"O, but I can't, you know, for my arm aches so I couldn't bend it any way, grandma, for it's all swelling."

"Then we'll keep it till morning, my dear, and you can come in here and sew an hour in the morning, and one in the afternoon. Now lie down and keep quiet a little while, while I tie up Jack properly. Why, Dora, 'tisn't possible you tore one of your new handkerchiefs! You left

one in the garden till it mildewed, and let another sail down the brook, and now, this is the third."

Dora looked a little ashamed.

"I didn't mean to, grandma, but it bled in a spirt all over me, and his finger wouldn't hold a whole handkerchief, so you see I had to tear it."

"Well, take off this dress, and get a clean apron from your second drawer, and then try to keep still."

"And Dora," whispered Jack, privately, "come down pretty soon, for I'm going to have another try at those squirrels."

Dora walked up the stairs soberly, and down the long hall, to the little room which had been her mother's before her. Here, forgetting apron and dress together, she curled up in the wide window-seat, and looked over the meadows to the great mountain, which ever since she could remember had stood there; its peak rising white in winter, soft, hazy, purple, or shrouded in mist in summer; but always the first thing her eyes rested on in the morning. Not the first thing either, for Dora's opening eyes met the sweet, steady look of the pictured face that was all she knew of her mother, who had left her when a lit-

tle baby, but after that first look were sure to go straight to the mountain. Dora's favorite among all the psalms began, "I will lift mine eyes unto the *hills* from whence cometh my help," and she never wondered that David should seem to need them, for she did herself every day, and a great many times a day. Sitting in the old window-seat, when the mood came, she dressed her dolls, five of whom spent sadly neglected lives, in or under their bed, sometimes undressed for a month, and again in full dress for another month, unless some motherly little girl, coming in for a Saturday afternoon play, took pity on them. The room ran more to hornet's nests, bird's nests, cocoons and gay pebbles, than to doll's belongings, for Dora and Jack wandered together through the woods, and came home with all manner of creeping and crawling things. Their last expedition had resulted in bringing home a very small, but very fierce, snapping turtle, which being carefully put in Dilly's bed, wandered about between the sheets, till that mighty body was settled for the night, and then, indignant at so much space being taken up, seized her little toe savagely, and held tight. Dilly, almost asleep, believed

the evil one had found her, and sprang from the bed, dancing about the room and screaming, while the obstinate turtle thumped an accompaniment as she went. Grandpa Winthrop's strength was needed before the wicked jaws would give way, and, for a day or two, Dora was in deep disgrace. She laughed, now, looking down to the box under her window, where the turtle still walked about, and then was ready to cry again as she remembered that all this must come to an end. The kittens, and the pigeons, and Rover, all to be left, to say nothing of Jack, the cousin, who had come to them six months before, and who would stay and enjoy it all when she had gone. Then all the girls, and above all, Alma and Julia Otis, who lived at the foot of the hill, and came up at least once a day. And in thinking of them a dreadful fear came over Dora, lest Jack would, in time, care more for them than for her. "Perhaps he's gone there now," she said, and spurred on by this thought, changed her dress and apron, smoothed her hair a little, and ran down.

No Jack in the house, but running down the hill, Dora heard him calling, and saw him in the long grape arbor at the side of the house.

"I was looking to see if the grapes would be ripe before you go away, Dora, but they won't. It's only the first of August now, and you've got to go in September."

"Don't let's talk about it," said Dora; "I don't want to think about it till the time comes. Let's have a good time. Get some pea-pods, and we'll go down to the brook and sail 'em."

"Well," said Jack, "and you run down for Alma and Julia while I get 'em. Tell Bob to come too."

Dora ran fast, but was long in returning, having found the two girls sewing patch-work, and with a "stent" to finish. So Dora stayed to help them, notwithstanding her arm, and hurried back at last, to find Jack fuming in the arbor.

"I tell you one thing," he shouted, "I sha'n't ever mind Dr. Phelps's pills again. I've been trying while I was waiting, and I can swallow the biggest grape here without winking."

"So can I," said Dora, out of breath with running, but looking about for the biggest one to be had.

"You are not as big as he is," said Julia, "and your mouth's smaller, too. I wouldn't do it."

"No, I know you wouldn't," said Dora, scornfully. "You're afraid to do most anything. Now I'll swallow a little one just to sort of stretch my throat, you know, and then you see if I can't take as big a one as Jack." Down went the little grape, and Dora, with a—

"One, two, three,
Away goes she,"

popped in the second one, which being fully twice as large, went part way and there stayed. Dora choked and gasped, but stir it would not, and as Jack saw her turning black in the face he pounded her furiously on the back, screaming, "Grandfather! Dilly! Dora's choking!"

Dilly heard and ran, and frightened at the child's struggle for breath, first pounded with Jack, and then finding this did no good, suddenly seized her, turned her neatly upside down, and rapped her head against the walk. Out flew the grape, and up flew the bumped and beaten, black and blue, Dora, ready to scratch Dilly's eyes out for the indignity put upon her. Julia and Alma screamed, Jack laughed, and Dilly cried, and Grandmother Winthrop running out, and beholding Dora flying at all of them, decided the whole family were crazy.

Alma told the story and then went home, while Jack, as the original first cause, was told to sit still an hour, and learn three more verses of Casabianca. Dora went in to have her throat gargled, her head bathed, and her nose, off which the skin had been rubbed, anointed with cream, and then she was laid on the sofa and ordered to keep quiet. "I believe I could have done it," she said, presently, "if it hadn't stuck just there."

"That's just it," said grandpa. "These wild things you undertake almost always do stick just there. You must learn to use your common sense a little, Dora."

"Jack did it, and I can do whatever he can, grandpa."

"Well, I'm glad there are only girls where you are going," said grandma. "And I do hope you won't get them to break all their necks at once."

Dora turned her face away and lay still, and when by and by her regular breathing told them she was sound asleep, grandpa said, for the twentieth time that day, "I don't know what that child will do among strangers."

CHAPTER II.

ON THE THRONE.

HOW those four weeks went by! Dora never could tell afterwards exactly what was done in them, though two hours' sewing daily was one distinct misery. Grandma brought out an old-fashioned apron of turkey red, in the last stages of tear and rip, and on this apron, with white thread, Dora experimented in every possible darn and patch. What stitches there were at first, and the patches might have been ruffles or puffs, or anything but patches. But before September came she could almost follow a thread, and each stitch stood out "plain as a little pearl," Jack said, when invited to compliment them. Then all the way down the back was a line of button-holes, beginning with a gash partially covered by staggering lines of thread, but ending in a great deal better button-hole than I am afraid many ten-

year-olds can make now. Grandpa brought out a pair of stockings; at least, they were stockings once, but toes and heels were missing; one top was a flap, and the other had gone to find the toes.

"Mend these Dora, so that I can wear them once more," said he, "and you shall have five dollars in five-cent pieces."

"You never wore them out like that, I know," said Dora, confidently. "I believe you've just chopped 'em every way so's to make me the most work. I don't care though, I'll do something to 'em."

Three days Dora worked over those wretched stockings, supported by Jack and Alma and Julia, who fed her with last year's butternuts, blackcaps, and fresh cheeses from that unfailing dairy around the door-step, while Dilly threw in crumbs of comfort in the shape of saucer pies and little cakes. One ball of yarn and part of another disappeared before the work was completed, but at last came an afternoon when Dora threw her yarn and scissors into the air, and with a stocking on each arm danced a jig with Jack, while Rover barked his congratulations. Then the children

stuffed the feet with harvest-apples, so that every darn stood out in bold relief, and while Dora made a wreath of hollyhocks, tiger lilies and small sunflowers, Jack brought out the best silver salver, and placed the work of art in the centre. Then the procession marched round to the library window to the tune of "The Campbells are Coming." Jack had arranged a solemn presentation speech, and was scandalized by Dora's forgetting every word, and contenting herself with handing the waiter through the window, and saying, "Here they are grandpa. Where's the five dollars?"

"Really mended?" said grandpa, much amazed, but receiving the offering with a stately bow. "You shall have your money by five o'clock, provided your ladyship can wait."

"I did want to do something with it right away," said Dora, "but may be it will do then."

"I'm sure it will," said a voice from within; "for I want you till then."

"O, it's Mr. Osgood!" said Dora, beamingly, as she skipped through the window. "I didn't know you had come home."

"I've only been here an hour or two. Don't you want to walk to the mill-pond?"

"O, indeed I do!" Dora said, "but I must tell Jack and the rest first."

Jack and the girls had, however, disappeared, knowing that Dora was lost to them for the rest of the afternoon; and soon she was running down the hill to the meadows through which the path to the mill-pond wound, followed more slowly by her friend.

Mr. Osgood was the minister of the little church to which the Winthrops went, and the children never ceased wondering at Dora's intimacy with him. He was a grave, rather silent man at his first coming, three or four years before, all of which time he had spent in the Winthrop's south chamber, back of which was Dora's room. This south room was a sort of fairy land, filled to running over with books and pictures which drew Dora like a magnet, and as soon as Mr. Osgood found that her harum-scarum ways never extended to her treatment of his pets, she had free access to them all the time. At first holding him in the greatest awe, as I think all children did their minister twenty years ago, she learned soon to look up to him as her nearest friend after grandfather and grandmother. Sitting perfectly

quiet in the broad window-seat, he often forgot her presence, and read over his sermons or bits from his favorite books, while Dora watched him with her great eyes, and thought no such delightful man had ever lived. In the long walks he took among the hills and deep into the woods where Dora never would have been allowed to go alone, she was very often his companion, and learned the way to all sorts of strange places, to which she was able by and by to introduce Jack.

All but one of them, and this special spot had such sacredness in her eyes that I doubt if she would hardly have been willing to take grandfather himself there. Going back from the mill-pond into thick woods, which even the village boys knew little about, you came soon to a branch of the mill-brook, and following it up half a mile or so, it broadened into almost a pond, in the centre of which was a high rock, from which grew one tall hemlock. How it grew was hard to tell, for there seemed only earth enough to give life to the ferns and grasses about its roots, but grow it did, taller and statelier than any tree Dora had ever seen. In June had been their first visit, when the water was still high from spring freshets,

and as they looked up to the rock, Dora said, "O, how I wish we could get up there."

"Exactly where we are going," Mr. Osgood said, pulling off his boots and setting them on a log. "Now Dora, put your arms around my neck; let me get hold of your small shoes, and over we go."

The water was not deep after all, not much over the knees, and in a minute Dora was scrambling up the sides, and finding between two roots a natural arm-chair, quite wide enough for two, moss-cushioned, and spicy with fallen leaves and cones. Through the opening in the forest, the mountain looked down upon them, and the birds sang on, as if people who came to such lonely places must belong there naturally, and were not to be feared. Mr. Osgood sat silently looking far off, and Dora, quiet too, leaned her head against his arm and felt perfectly content.

"You never brought me here before," she said, by and by; "I didn't know there was such a nice place in the world. Why didn't you bring me before?"

"Because I didn't know as we were good friends enough: I only want to bring the people that I love best here."

Dora cuddled up closer, and was still a minute, then she said:

"I wish I was your little wife so't I could go everywhere with you. Don't you wish I was?"

Mr. Osgood smiled, but the very grave eyes which looked at him forbade any such levity.

"I'm afraid it wouldn't do, Dolly. You were eight in March, I believe. We shall have to wait a little."

"Well, *will* you wait?" persisted Dora. "I can do a great many things now, and you know I shall be learning all the time. You can teach me too. I love you harder'n anybody."

"Do you, child?" said Mr. Osgood with a little look she did not understand. "Well, we'll think about it."

That was over a year ago, and this had been their favorite walk ever since. Here Dora had talked over her plans for the future, confessed her sins, and had made tremendous resolutions, broken and re-made every few weeks. To-day August heats had lowered the brook, till she could easily reach "the throne" as she called it, by jumping from one stone to another. The last was a long leap, but Mr. Osgood swung her over,

and soon she was in the old seat. Then a sudden memory of all she must leave came over her, and holding tight to his hand she cried for a little while some very bitter tears. Mr. Osgood said little, but drew her into his arms, and held her till she was more quiet. Then he asked:

"Did you know I was going with you, Dora?"

"To school? Why how can you? Not to stay! Oh, I'm so glad! What makes you?"

"Because your grandmother is not well enough to be left by your grandfather, and your father cannot take time to come on for you. He is very busy now."

"Yes, I know," said Dora, absently. "He always is busy. He hasn't been here but once since I was a baby, and then he didn't say anything to me hardly. I don't believe he loves me a bit."

"He loves you enough to have found this pleasant school for you, and to want you to learn how to be a good woman. He has never had you with him, Dody, or any other child, I think, and hardly knows what to say to one."

"Well, I don't mind it much," said Dora, "but there is one thing I keep thinking about, Mr.

Osgood. You know what I do so much without meaning to," here Dora turned very red, but hurried on. "Now just suppose I should get going there, and couldn't stop, you know, and they should all think just as father does that I—well, that I tell lies. I don't tell real true lies, now, do I? It's only stories for fun."

Mr. Osgood waited a moment. "Can't you think just what they are yourself?" he said. "What was it when you told old Mrs. Stevens that there was a singing mouse in the wall in your room, and that you fed it every day, and it could sing 'There is a happy land,' straight through, and you heard it teaching it to the other mice?"

"Well, it was partly true any way," Dora said, eagerly. "I did feed it, and I thought may be it might sing. I've read about singing mice."

"And then when grandfather was altering the barn, you told Mr. Pettis your father had bought you a little, tame elephant with a seat on his back, just like those in the menagerie, and you were going to ride every day. When he said, 'O sho, now!' you declared so solemnly it was so, that he went to the post-office, and told everybody your father was crazy, and your grandfather

too. Then when old aunt Patty asked you to buy her some tea, you said she needn't ever buy any more, for your father had given you the money, and you had got a big box for her. So the poor soul waited a week, expecting it every day, and at last asked me. What could I say, and what do you really think about it, Dora?"

Dead silence, and Dora looking steadfastly at the toes of her boots. Mr. Osgood sat watching her, and almost laughed aloud as he remembered something which had happened two years before. Sitting with his doors open he had heard Dora in her own room, going to bed under aunt Katy's superintendence. Almost every day she told some wonderful story founded on fiction, but had been making a special effort to reform. So in saying her prayers that night she congratulated herself on having been all day strictly truthful, in this fashion:

"God bless grandpa and grandma, and everybody, make me a good girl, and I'm glad I haven't told any fibs to-day."

"Wait a minute, Dora," said aunt Kate. "What did I hear you telling Dilly this afternoon, about your father buying ten pink dresses

all alike, and you were going to give one to all the little girls you liked best?"

"O, so I did!" said Dora, conscience smitten. "And I never thought. Do you believe I'd better say something about it?"

"Why it seems to me I should want to settle it before going to sleep," said aunt Kate, and kneeling down again, Dora added fervently, "Only one, God; only one."

All this went through Mr. Osgood's mind much more quickly than I can write it, and Dora still sat silent.

"I'll tell you what it is, Dora," he said at last. "God has given you in your little garden a wonderful plant called imagination. Truth and honor and gentleness and many another good thing grow side by side, but unless you continually prune this quick growing fancy it overtops everything else, and poor truth dies down. Keep it trained just right, and everything in your garden is made more beautiful and lovely by it. But if you forget even for a minute or two, it flies up like Jack's bean stalk, and spoils all the work you have done for truth. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said Dora, in a very faint voice.

"Now I don't think you tell lies in the way I have heard some children, and big people, too. You never, since I have known you, have told one to screen yourself from the results of mischief or wrong doing, or one that could harm any one else. But that isn't the thing. In your little soul I know you love truth. You are going where people do not know you as I do, and may have to suffer for this very thing. Dear child, try to remember all day and every day to care for all those other plants, but let imagination be kept low down, till it has learned not to creep into the wrong places. Will you try?"

"Oh, I will! Truly I will!" said Dora, fervently.

"Do you remember the story of Prince Cherry and the ring that pricked him whenever he did wrong? Well, my ring doesn't prick, but I hope it will answer the same purpose. Which finger will it best fit, Dody?"

Mr. Osgood had drawn a little box from his pocket, and now took from it a ring in which were set six stones. A ring, such as, years ago, little and big girls were glad to own, but which one seldom sees now-a-days.

"Take the first letter of each stone as I name it," he said, "and see what it spells. Ruby, emerald, garnet, amethyst, ruby, diamond."

"R. E. G. A. R. D." said Dora, with delight. "That means love, doesn't it? Well, I do love you, and I shall never forget, seems to me. You don't know how I shall try. Now put it on your own self, please."

Mr. Osgood slipped it on her left hand forefinger, which it fitted as if made for it. "These stones all mean something, too," he said, "or at any rate people in old times thought they did. Ruby is love, and there are two of them you see, because love is the chief thing in the world. Amethyst is purity; emerald, strength; garnet, steadfastness, which is the same thing as strength. It means the power to say 'no' to even the pleasantest thing that is wrong. And diamond is faithfulness, which covers the whole ground, for if you are thoroughly faithful, you will be pure and steady, throughout all the days of your life. I've preached you a long sermon, Dody dear, but we shall not come to our 'throne' again before next spring, I suppose."

Dora put her arms about Mr. Osgood's neck,

and held him tight a moment. Then still holding her, he went down the rock, and over the stepping stones to the shore. "You will not be a little body much longer," he said, as he put her down, "and when we come again next spring you may be able to carry me over—who knows?"

Tea was waiting when they got home, and waited still longer, while Dora showed her ring, and then pounced on a small, rather grimy, and very heavy bag by her plate.

Jack's knife had been waiting impatiently for an hour to cut the string, and now he did it with such vigor, that a silvery shower fell out and rolled every way.

"O, you hateful thing!" was almost on the tip of Dora's tongue, but she thought just in time, as Jack said, penitently, "I'll pick 'em every one up after tea. I'd put 'em in a bank, Dora, and then you can't get out enough at a time to do any harm."

Dora's eyes had in the mean time caught sight of something else. "O, what's that?" she said. "A new trunk! I can't eat my supper, grandma. Can't I look at it now?"

"Eat first," said grandma, and Dora, much

against her will began, but found things really tasted good after her long walk. At last when the hundred five-cent pieces had all been picked up and admired, and laid on a plate for future consideration, Mr. Winthrop opened the trunk, a large leather one, all the way from New York, and with her name painted on the cover. Inside was a writing-desk, with every possible convenience for writing, and a dressing-case holding such an assortment of brushes and boxes as Dora had never seen. There were one or two pieces of soft, bright merino for dresses, and a little hood trimmed with swan's down, which delighted Dora's soul. To this was pinned a bit of paper, and on it Dora read.

"For Dora, from her affectionate father."

"I guess he does care about me some," she thought, beginning to believe there were compensations in going to school, and wondering at the little feeling of eagerness which came over her, as she remembered there were only four days longer.

Those four days were well filled. The village dress-maker was busy on her new dresses as she had been for some time before. Grandma and

Dilly prepared for, and saw safely through, a party for all the little girls, and Dora went about bidding everybody good-bye. The trunk was packed a dozen times with an extraordinary variety of things shocking to the feelings of the most amiable teacher, and all carefully removed by grandmother. Then came a real packing with which Dora had little to do, and at last the trunk stood, strapped and directed. It was good that they started early in the morning, rather than at night, for Dora had barely time to eat a little breakfast, take one more look at all the pleasant places, and then blind with tears, and begging not to be sent away, stumbled into the old stage which took them to the depot. Half the children in town were there to see her off, and Dora tried to say good-bye to each, but broke down again, and was lifted by grandfather into the cars, and hugged once more as the dreadful whistle sounded. Then a jerk, a dozen of them, and Dora flattening her unhappy nose against the car window looked her last look for many a day at the crowd of familiar faces.

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING.

TWENTY years ago a railroad journey was a wonderful event in a child's life, and by no means a common one to even a "grown up." The road through Windsor had only been finished a short time, and had Dora started six months before, it would have been in an old-fashioned four-horse stage, rocking like a big cradle, and needing two or three days for the journey she would take in one. They were to stay in New Haven over night, and to go on to Edgefield the next day; and Dora, after her first burst of sorrow ended, could not but be interested. Claremont she knew all about, and half a dozen other little towns, and when they stopped at Bellows Falls to change cars, she had time to go down to the Island House to look at the rapids for nearly half an hour. After that they went

steadily on, only stopping at Springfield for dinner, and late in the afternoon rumbled into the dark hole that then as now the benighted New Havenites called depot. Dora walked about the college green, but was too tired to enjoy much, and went to bed directly after supper.

By noon next day they had reached Wolcottville, the nearest railroad station to Edgefield, ten miles away.

"I wish I could go with you to the end, Dora," said Mr. Osgood; "but the train I must take if I am to be in my church Sunday, passes here in an hour. The stage does not leave here till then, and we can take a little walk, or sit quietly, just as you choose."

"A walk," Dora said, eager to get away from the curious eyes all about, that watched her as eyes at country stations always will; and when Mr. Osgood had seen her trunk strapped to the stage rack, they walked briskly away. There should be no crying this last hour, he determined, and Dora, who thought she was utterly miserable, found herself laughing harder and harder, as he told one queer story and then another. They were at the top of the hill when the whistle

sounded at the station two miles above Wolcottville, and they must run like "all possessed," Dora said. Run they did, and the loungers stared at the dignified gentleman in the white cravat, who rushed down the hill, closely pursued by Dora, bundled her into the stage with a hasty hug, and plunged across the platform to the train just beginning to move off, giving a final wave as a curve hid them from sight.

Three or four people got into the stage. A little woman with a big band-box shrouded in a red calico cover; two men, and at last a stout woman with an equally stout daughter, not over twelve or thirteen; but Dora wondered how she staid in her clothes at all, for she seemed to bulge out and run over wherever she could; over the tops of her boots and her gloves, and the ruffles round her neck. She had bright twinkling eyes, and within three minutes of settling in the stage, had opened a wicker basket and taken out a pickle.

"Now, Cynthy, don't," said the stout woman; "you won't want a mite o' dinner."

"You know you said I'd have to eat vinegar to keep me down," remarked Miss Cynthia, bit-

ing her pickle. "Don't you want one?" she added, turning to Dora: "I've got a jar of 'em in here."

"No, thank you," said Dora, amazed at her ease; "I don't like pickles." Then remembering this was not exactly polite—"I mean, no, I thank you."

"Was that your father that came lickity-split down the hill?" pursued Cynthia, evidently bent upon both acquaintance and information.

"No," said Dora, unable to help smiling at the memory of it.

"What relation was he?"

"Not any."

"Oh, your guardeen? Be you an orphan?"

"No," said Dora, beginning to feel a little indignant, and determined not to tell anything she could help.

"Oh!" said Cynthia, staring at her: "you're going to Miss Jones's, ain't you?"

"I'm going to Miss Jones's school."

"So'm I. I've been a term before. I'm the oldest of the little girls. I knew there was a new one coming. Now there'll be eight of us, an' that's all Miss Jones'll take. My name's

Cynthia Almira Bostwick, and they call me 'Fatty Bostwick.' I don't care. What's yours?"

"Theodora Winthrop Maynard."

"My gracious! don't they ever call you anything shorter?"

"They call me Dora," said Dora, again indignant.

"I should think they'd better," said Miss Cynthia, paying no attention to a warning nudge from her mother. "Was you named for anybody, or did your ma make it up? Ma made mine up."

"Is it a nice school?" asked Dora, changing subject.

"You have to study awful hard. I study everything; French and music, too, so's to keep me down, but it don't do any good. Ma says she was just so. It's kind of handy when you can't have feathers to sleep on. Miss Jones won't let us sleep on feathers, an' she makes us keep the window open nights. Ma said it would kill me, and some of us used to get up and shut 'em. Miss Jones heard it. She hears everything, and she popped in every time and let 'em down again. She says her house shall have the Lord's

air blowing through it, and not be filled with a horrid mess of gas blown out of his miserable creatures. I never knew till I went there, that there was so much dirt about people. You'd think we'd lived in mud puddles all our days, to see the way she makes us scrub. And if you won't do it yourself she'll do it for you, and not mind a speck about taking some skin off. Ma thought it would take me down, but it don't."

Dora made a mental resolution to do her own scrubbing, and waited for more developments.

"Oh, I guess you'll think it's queer," said Cynthia, the last end of her pickle disappearing, as she felt in her basket for another. "Now, I've got to eat these every one up—you'd better have one—or else put 'em in the common closet. That's a closet where everything has to go that anybody sends the girls, unless it's apples or oranges. All the cakes, and pies, and everything out o' the boxes. She won't let you eat a mite of 'em between meals, but puts 'em on for tea or dinner, and everybody has some. I'd just as soon give 'em all some, but I say it's mean you can't keep a little to eat when you're hungry."

"Can't you have anything between meals?"

asked Dora, remembering Dilly's bounty, and thinking, also, of a certain great cake in her trunk.

"Not a speck of anything but apples or bread. She says if you're hungry enough for bread, you shan't be denied, but she won't have us filling ourselves with unwholesomeness. I tell you I eat when I get home! But you have pretty good times, only she's after you every minute."

"Did you hear about the way she fit with the sexton last winter?" said one of the men, turning to Mrs. Bostwick. "Now it did just beat all. Hiram (that's the sexton) he'd gone and nailed up all the winders, and stuffed the cracks with cotton, and tacked listing all along to keep the wind out. The church is on a hill, you know, and the wind blows powerful. Miss Jones has three pews right up in front, and a winder alongside. She always comes early, so's to see to things, an' she come marching in with her twelve gals an' old Miss Jones and Uncle Isaac. Set 'em all down, and set herself down, an' then she begun to sniff. Begun to fan a minit, but that didn't do; then she sniffed agin; an' then she mounts up on her seat, an looks at the winder.

'Ah, I thought so,' says she; an' she took hold of that listing an' yanked it right off. The cotton was stuffed in tight, but she off with her gloves, and out it comes. Hiram's a little softly kind o' man, but it sort o' riled him, and he steps round: 'Now, Miss Jones,' says he, 'there ain't no use in that. I'll just have to put it all back. It takes more wood now than the congregation's willing to pay for to keep us comfortable, and you haven't no call to let in such a draught.' 'Sorry you've had your work for nothing' says Miss Jones, with her ma kind o' shivering all the time, 'but in the Lord's house I'll breathe the Lord's air. I don't bring my school here to poison them in the sanctuary.' Hiram couldn't say nothing more, for there was strangers there, an' old Judge Church a beckonin' to him like mad to come an' seat 'em. Between services, though, he stuffed that cotton all back, an' nailed the listing with a double row of nails. 'She won't get that off in a hurry,' says he. Well, come church time agin, and she looked fust thing at the winder. That beat her, for without a claw she couldn't stir an inch of it. She worked an' worked, an' when she found she couldn't do nothin', she jest up with her pa's cane an' smashed

a light in the top o' the winder. Hiram was so astonished he didn't come nigh her. Reckon he thought she might take him in the head, but after service Dr. Stone comes down and says: 'My dear Miss Jones, wasn't that a little injudicious?' 'Not a bit,' says she; "I'll break a pane every Sunday till Hiram takes that stuff away, or else I'll give up my sittings here, and go off to the Methodists. You're a man of sense, Dr. Stone,' says she; 'and ought to be thankful to me for letting in a decent breath.' Dr. Stone sort o' smiled, and Hiram, who'd been standin' there, mad as a hatter, kind o' thought he might as well knuckle down to't, else she'd go off. He took off the listing, but she had to pay for a new pane."

"That's her all over," said Mrs. Bostwick; "but she's a good teacher. Makes 'em learn, whether they will or not."

Dora listened, wondering what sort of a life she should lead, and prepared to be put in a cold bath or set in a draught the moment she arrived. The way seemed short, beguiled as it was by such reminiscences; the stage horses were strong, and kept up a steady jog up hill and down, and before she knew it they were whisked up before a

big gate, and looking through a line of great elms, she saw a white house, and a swarm of girls about the door.

"It's Fatty! It's Fatty Bostwick!" the shout went up, and a rush was made to the stage. Fatty tried to jump, but rolled instead, as would naturally have been expected, and landed on her nose on the grass, while the pickles, emulating her example, rolled too, as the basket lid flew off.

"Let me have one! and me! and me!" shouted the chorus, pouncing upon the pickles, while Mrs. Bostwick picked up the fallen Cynthia, and brushed her off and smoothed her down.

"Now Cynthy, do have some manners," she said. "There's Miss Jones coming."

"I thought it was you, Cynthia Bostwick," said a voice from the door-way. "I smelled pickles when the stage was at the top of the hill. How do you do, Mrs. Bostwick? So you've brought Cynthia to have me undo your four week's work. Well, I will if I can. So every one of you has got pickles! Now some mince-pie and we shall have the representative American girl. Here's one empty handed. Who are you, my dear?"

The keen gray eyes rested not unkindly on

Dora, who, lost in astonishment, faltered "Dora Maynard," and then stood still, wishing she were under, or out of, or anywhere but in the spot she was.

"Ah! yes; just so," said Miss Jones, slowly. "Well, Dora, you seem to have come with Cynthia, and she will tell you the names of the girls, and show you your room. I will see you after tea. You can unpack your trunk this afternoon. Here is your room-mate, Ida Thorn. She will take you up-stairs and show you where to put your things."

Ida came forward—a delicate girl of nine or ten, with long brown curls, held back by a silver comb, at which Dora looked with delight. Her own hair had been curly once, but repeated cuttings had left only what Dilly called "just a kick up on the ends," and though she privately experimented with hot slate pencils and papers it was still too short for anything but the kick. Ida led the way up the front stairs and through a wide upper hall, where stood a great soap-stone stove.

"That's where we get warm in winter," said Ida. "We don't have fires in our rooms, but we

can run out there to dress if we want to. That's Miss Jones's room on one side, and the big girls have the others. There's a partition in the middle, just as there is in ours, for she won't let but two be in a room. There's a hole in our partition, where a knot came out, or something, and we can talk through all we've a mind to. We've got to keep it clean too. Can you sweep?"

Before Dora had time to answer, a door was thrown open, and showed a room a little larger than her own at home, and looking beautifully clean and sweet with its white bed and curtained window. There was a tall, old-fashioned bureau, with six drawers, at one side of which stood Ida's trunk, while room had been left on the other for Dora's. Two low chairs stood by the window, and Dora ran to it at once to see what her future out-look was to be. No mountain, as at home, but a long range of low hills in the distance, and nearer by one high one. Underneath the window a grape vine climbed up, and the trees of a great orchard stretched away to a brook, at one end crossed by a little bridge.

"That's Sugar-loaf," said Ida, pointing to the hill; "and we can go there just when we choose,

if our marks are good. There always is a Sugar-loaf every place I've been. There's four shelves in the closet, two for each of us, and five hooks apiece. We've got the best bureau there is, because there'a two drawers in the top, and we can each have a side. All the girls fight so for a top drawer. The washstand's behind that screen. I guess you'll hate it as much as I do after you've been here a while. Don't you want I should help you unpack?"

Dora would gladly have said "no," but hardly dared to, and Ida, perched on one of the chairs, watched the taking out of each article, and advised as to its place, besides giving full opinions as to quality and style.

"Your things are nice enough," she said at last; "but you ought to see Mississippi Smith's. She came two days ago, way from Indiana, and she had so many dresses there wasn't room in the closet for one of Clem's things—Clem's my sister. She said she would hang 'em all up anyway; so Clem went to Miss Jones and told her she wished she could have another room, for nobody could turn round where Sippy was. You ought to have seen Miss Jones come marching down the

hall. 'Lay your dresses on the bed, Mississippi,' says she, 'and we will soon find out what you need. That pink silk and the blue one I'll take and put in the linen room, and these barèges can be folded and go back to the bottom of your trunk. Eighteen dresses! Well; four of them you can keep out, and I'll write to your mother that that is all any girl needs in the winter. Two are plenty —one for school and one for Sunday; but I won't cut you down to that now.' Sippy kept making the awfullest faces at her when she wasn't looking, but it didn't do any good. She's got lots of jewelry, too, and she has so much money she doesn't know what to do. Are you all through? because if you are, I'll take you down to the school-room, and tell you about all the girls."

"Isn't there any teacher but Miss Jones?" Dora asked.

"Oh, yes; there's Miss Miller—she's a kind of scholar too, but she see's to us down here. Her room's right at the end between all of ours, and she marks us if we make too much noise. Mr. Bush comes to give us music lessons, and Mungseer Germain is the French teacher. Can you talk French?"

"No," said Dora; "I wish I could."

"I can, some; one of the big girls taught me. I can say 'hickory, dickory dock' in French."

"O, let's hear it," Dora began, but stopped as the bell rung. "What's that for?"

"That's the first bell for tea. There's always two for every meal with ten minutes between, and you have to wash your face and hands, and brush your hair, and go right down for inspection."

"In what?" Dora said to herself, splashing away, and speedily pulled along by Ida to the school-room, where stood in a line six little girls. Dora took her place next an over-dressed child who she thought must be Mississippi, and waited. In a minute Miss Jones came in and passed quickly down the line. "Hold your hands out so't she can see," whispered Ida, and Dora, not in the least knowing what was wanted, held them out as far as she could.

"Shameful nails," said Miss Jones, stopping at the third little girl. "Dolly Baldwin, don't let it happen again. Go up-stairs and clean them. Dora Maynard, what have you got on your hands! ink? You are not to use ink except in school."

"It's blackberries," said Dora, her cheeks dyed as deeply as her hands. "I got them on the hill at the station, and it won't come off."

"That is an accident then and does not count," said Miss Jones. "Now walk quietly to the dining-room," and heading the procession she led the way to a long square room where stood a long table on which were pitchers of milk, platters of baked apples, bread, brown and white, and piles of gingerbread. An old, white haired gentleman stood at one end, and as all paused behind their chairs, tapped on the table and after a moment's silence sat down.

"What's that for?" asked Dora in a whisper.

"Silent blessing," Ida answered. "How frightened you looked at inspection. She won't do it but once a day after we get going just right, but the first two or three weeks she looks at us three times a day, so as to get us into the right way she says. You've got to be clean whether you want to or not."

"I am clean," said Dora, indignantly. "I've always lived with clean people."

"Well, you'll have to be here," said Ida, not caring to pursue the subject. "To-morrow morn-

ing school will begin, for now we're all here. She'll examine you to-night may be."

Dora's heart sank within her, but revived a little as she went on with her bread and butter, which was perfect as bread and butter could be. The tall old clock in the corner was like the one at Grandfather Winthrop's, and a secretary like his stood in one corner. Dora, looking about curiously, felt comforted as she saw these familiar objects, and still more so as she met the kindly eyes of the old gentleman at the head, who smiled at her like an old friend. Tea over, Miss Jones went with Dora to her room; approved of her arrangement of her clothes; confiscated the big cake, of course, and then asked a series of questions as to what she had learned and knew, leading her on so quietly that she hardly realized it was an examination. In the midst of it another bell rang and Dora was taken to the parlor, where Miss Miller played the evening hymn, while the girls sang very sweetly.

"Remember the rules," was Miss Jones's last word. "Clean your teeth all of you before going to bed."

Dora expected to cry, but was asleep almost

before her head touched the pillow, and knew nothing more until a bell rang and she sprang up to find the morning sunshine streaming in, while a series of groans and splashes and shivers, showed that Ida had begun the dreaded daily sponging.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT A FLY DID.

SATURDAY passed slowly and yet quickly. Lessons were given out for Monday, and they studied for two hours. *Mungseer*, as Ida called him, came in and organized his classes, and Mr. Bush settled the hours for music-lessons. Dora was introduced to Miss Miller, a sharp-eyed, not exactly pleasant-looking person, who hoped they should be good friends, which Dora doubted. By dinner-time she knew the names of all the girls, big and little. Miss Miller, the oldest of the old ones, then Maria Baldwin, Dolly's sister, and then Ellen Woodland, a sentimental-looking young lady, who carried ivory tablets in her pocket, and wore a ribbon with a heart for a slide, and a gold pencil at the end. She had dreamy blue eyes, and sat tapping her teeth with the pencil; and looking off into nowhere, till Miss Jones said, rather severely as Dora thought:

"Now, Miss Woodland, if you'll be good enough to bring your mind for a few moments down to our hum-drum level, you will find occupation in this algebra."

"I despise mathematics," murmured Miss Woodland, "they degrade all one's fine feelings."

"People have no business with fine feelings till they have a foundation of a few fine facts," said Miss Jones, and then added, as she saw Dora's eyes fixed upon her, "common sense is a valuable faculty, and the want of it does not indicate one is a genius."

Miss Woodland colored and bent over her algebra, and Cynthia whispered, "She always talks just so, but that don't hinder Ellen from writing beautiful poetry. You ought to see some there is in my album. She wrote it when my kitten died."

"O! can you have kittens?" said Dora, delightedly.

"*To* be sure. There's ten in the barn this minute; but they're only allowed to come into the house Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, when we have half-holidays. I'll show 'em to you this afternoon."

"I'll show 'em to her," whispered Ida, who had developed a warm affection for Dora, and sat now with her arm around her. "She's my room-mate."

"Well, I guess folks can speak to her if she is other folks' room-mate," said Cynthia, bridling. "I guess we're all going to play together, Ida Thorn."

Dora felt uncomfortable, and was glad when the first bell rang for dinner. Dora went to the same seat she had had in the morning, and was told by Cynthia to take the next one. "We don't have one steady place, you see," she said. "We're all fixed the way we're to be by each other, and then we have to move round one place every day. That's so that we can all sit next to Miss Jones every little while, so't she can see how we behave. The big girls have to change, too."

"I don't believe I could eat a bit with Miss Jones looking at me," said Dora.

"She doesn't look at you unless you do something awful, and she talks real nice sometimes."

Dora meditated as to what "something awful" might be, and privately resolved, when her turn came, to copy the deportment of Miss Woodland,

who was opposite her, and who crooked her little finger in the most genteel manner, as she held her tumbler, or bread and butter. In the mean time she practiced a little, too, finding it rather awkward, till, forgetting the eyes about her, she at last planted her elbow on the table, and with finger crooked to the utmost, held her tumbler and looked abstractedly over it, as her example had done.

"Badly cramped, is it? Better let me rub it for you," said Miss Jones, in a sympathetic voice, and Dora started so that the tumbler fell from her hand. Luckily there was but little water in it; but Miss Woodland, who had seen it all, and who supposed fun was being made of her, looked indignant, and all the girls were laughing. Dora's cheeks burned, and she could have cried, but she tried hard to finish her dinner as if nothing had happened.

"Never mind," said Ida, when they had left the table; "Miss Jones makes fun of everything, but I think it looks real nice. It shows your rings so, only you didn't have yours on that hand. Did you think you had? It's a real pretty ring, anyway. Aren't you glad we haven't

been here long enough to have any holes in our stockings? Every Saturday we have to mend from half-past ten to twelve. Can you darn?"

"I should think I could," said Dora, remembering her practice. "I got five dollars for learning how—all in five-cent pieces, too. I've got 'em in my trunk. I'm going to buy Christmas presents with 'em, may be. Oh, what a splendid barn! I never saw such a big one."

"No, nor anybody else," said Cynthia, running up, followed by the crowd. "That room off the side is for us to play in rainy days. There's two tilts, an' two swings, and those ladders on the sides are for us to climb. She says the more we climb the better she shall like it."

"And there's holes in the hay-loft," said Dolly Baldwin. "And sometimes you fall through, and think it'll kill you, but it don't, because there's always plenty of hay to fall on. Sippy fell right down into the cow's manger last term. There wasn't but one cow there, because she was sick, and she jumped away back and mooed. Sippy sat up straight and screamed, and old Brownie just walked up to her and licked her head before we could pull her out—licked her

hair all over to one side, you know. You ought to have seen Sippy. Now let's come and get some apples."

"But the kittens," said Dora. "I haven't seen the kittens."

"Oh, yes. Well, you'll have to climb up. They're under the eaves. There's three sets. Brimstone's are right in here."

Cynthia made a dive into a dark hole, and came out in a minute, holding two little yellow and white kittens, which were at once taken possession of by a pale yellow cat and returned to their proper place.

"That's the way Brimstone always acts," said Cynthia. "So does Omlet. Omlet's got four, and Mehitable's got four. Hit's gray, and's the prettiest, but Miss Jones likes Brimstone. She says when she was little she had thirteen cats, and a blue ribbon round all their necks, and they went everywhere she did. Now come to the brook."

Dora followed, eager to learn all the ins and outs of her new home. A path wound through the orchard and beyond the little bridge which they crossed. Dora stopped a moment to lean

over the rail, and look down to the swift-flowing water. "Can we ever go in it?" she asked.

"See that?" asked Cynthia, pointing farther down to a sort of tent. "That's a bathing house. It's the old hay cart that got run away with and smashed. So Miss Jones had it sort of set up, like a corn crib, and a cover made for it, and we use it all summer to dress in. We can go into the brook every day, and she's had it dug out and fixed with gravel at the bottom so't it's splendid. There was a leech in there last summer, and one day he took right hold on my leg. I danced, and did every way to shake him off. Couldn't bear to touch him, you know, and Miss Jones heard me screaming, and came and pulled him off. She said she wished about forty had taken hold, and I'd had to dance 'em all off. She guessed that would take me down sooner'n anything. We can't go in any more till next year. See Ida prink. That's 'cause she sees Ned Seymour over there. She thinks there's nothing like a boy. I don't. They don't do anything but plague you, and gobble down all the best things."

As Cynthia talked they had walked on by the

bathing house, and then back again to a fence which separated Miss Jones's land from the next place. Ida and Clem, with two or three other little girls, stood here on one side, while from the other Ned Seymour tossed red-cheeked apples, no sweeter than those they were privileged to pick, but gaining a flavor in their passage through Ned's hands, unknown to their brethren.

"Hallo, Fatty!" he said, shying an apple at her and looking at Dora; "you're pining away, Fatty. You'll come to an early grave if you don't eat more. I heard Miss Jones tell mother she couldn't sleep nights thinking how poorly you looked."

Cynthia sat down on the stile, and ate her apple composedly, paying no attention to Ned.

"Too far gone to speak," continued Ned. "Well, it'll soon be tea time, and you'll feel better when you've had a bite of something. There's Frank Kinnicutt. We're going squirrel shooting this afternoon."

"O, don't!" said Dora, impulsively, forgetting she had never seen him before. "How can you kill the pretty things?"

"It's only on Fatty's account," said Ned.

"They're good in pies, you know, and the doctor says her appetite must be tempted."

"Why don't you say something?" said Dolly. "I wouldn't let any one make such fun of me."

"You don't answer the wind when it blows, do you?" said Cynthia, calmly. "No more do I trouble my head about Ned Seymour."

"Don't think of anything that can worry you," said Ned, making a low bow as he walked away. "Perfect quiet's the only thing that'll bring you up."

"Perfect sarce is the only thing that takes you along now," said Cynthia. "I'd like to know what you're squealing about, Ida Thorn. Don't you go to making a dunce of Dora, too. I say, Dora, they all think they can't live without talking about some boy all the time. There's only three or four Miss Jones lets us have anything to do with, you know, 'cause there ain't any more she can trust. Ned belongs to Ida, and Franky to Dolly, and all the rest of us have to hang on to Fred and Arthur Chase. It comes hard on them to have to treat three girls apiece."

"They don't," said Clem, indignantly. "We only put our money together when we go off,

so's to have more things. And Franky don't like Dolly any better'n he does anybody else. Which one do you believe you'll like the best, Dora?"

"None of 'em, I guess; my affections are engaged," said Dora, simply, thinking to herself that with such a friend as Mr. Osgood, and such a cousin as Jack, she should never care much for any boy.

Such a shout went up from those little girls, led off by Miss Miller, who had come down to see what was going on among them, and who sat down on a stone and rocked back and forth.

"Engaged!" she said. "Well, that is good. I must let Miss Jones know, so that you can be treated with proper consideration. Engaged! Oh!"

Dora was boiling over, but too shy even then to speak what she felt, turned and rushed toward the house, and reaching the shelter of her room, locked the door, and threw herself on the bed. "I can't stand it!" she said, over and over again, as she cried. "That hateful Miss Miller! I knew I shouldn't like her, and now she'll tell everybody what she heard me say. What did I say it

for? I didn't know any of them. I wish I hadn't come to school."

"Open the door," said a voice from outside, which she knew to be Miss Miller's.

"She sha'n't see me crying," Dora said, sitting up and listening.

"Open the door this minute, or I shall tell Miss Jones," said Miss Miller, rattling the latch, and exasperating Dora still farther. At home she locked herself in her room when she chose. Who was Miss Miller, that she should push into everything? Miss Jones had gone out, she knew, for the afternoon, and she sat perfectly quiet, while Miss Miller rattled, and pounded, and scolded, and finally went away. Then, too angry to cry any more, she went to her trunk, took out her writing desk, and from it a little book in which she had promised grandfather to write at least once a week all the little happenings of her every-day life. This certainly deserved some record. Dora took out her book, found a nicely sharpened pen, and wrote in her plainest hand:

"*Sept. 18th, 1849.*—I hate Miss Miller, and I am going to remember to be as ugly to her as I can."

That looked badly. Dora repented as she thought it over, but was not sorry enough to scratch it out. But she added, "I don't exactly mean that, but I don't like her, but I'll be good if I can." The tea-bell rang before she felt quite ready to go down, and Ida came running up to get ready for inspection. She hugged Dora, and said, "You must tell me all about it sometime; to-night, may be."

Dora shook her head, but went down to tea a little comforted, only wondering if Miss Miller had told Miss Jones. Nothing was said, and Dora felt some sense of victory, lost again in a great rain of homesick tears that wet her pillow long after she should have been asleep.

Dora wished the next day anything but Sunday—the "*think*" day as she had called it when a little younger. Lessons would have taken up her mind, and perhaps dulled the forlorn homesickness that was taking possession of her. The Sunday-school lesson was a help, and then Sippy held a long conversation through the knot-hole, as to which dress she had better wear, ending with a snappish little gush of tears as she said.

"It's too hateful to have all the clothes you

want, and then not to have any to wear after all. I'd tell pa, but he says I've got to mind Miss Jones."

Clem burned off a lock of hair on a hot slate pencil, and was forced to give her mind to covering the spot as well as she could, and Ida fretted at lessons, and church, and everything else, till Dora felt like screaming, and said, "Do keep still!"

At last everybody was ready. Miss Jones looked over the line, sending Sippy back to take off a pair of gay bracelets, and waiting till the young lady re-appeared in tears. Then they set out up the beautiful village street, the procession headed by old Mr. and Mrs. Jones, and Dora wondering if Dr. Stone could be one bit like Mr. Osgood. The first hour was a bewildering one. She had never been accustomed to the Episcopal service, and lost her place continually. The constant getting up and down she thought very bewildering, and was altogether confused when the sermon began. Then she looked around for the first time, wondering what the people were like, half smiling as she caught a look from Ned Seymour, who sat near, and flushing as Miss

Miller, whose eyes were everywhere, shook her head severely. Dora looked away from her quickly, and toward an old man who sat in a side pew near the pulpit, leaning his head on a cane. His coat had a small cape, hardly reaching below the shoulder, and there were large brass buttons on the front and cuffs. But his face and head struck her more strangely than the coat, or deep white ruffles, rushing out from the waistcoat. He was older than anybody she had ever seen, if she could judge by the many wrinkles, and the snow-white fringe of hair, cut straight across his forehead, as she had seen in pictures of the old puritans. This fringe was about his whole head, and how it could be, Dora puzzled, that the ends should be so white, and all the rest so red.

For red it was, a pale, worn-out sort of red, lying close to his head, save just on the crown, where stood up straight one white stiff lock, like a plume. Dora had never heard of, or, at any rate, had forgotten, that such things as wigs were ever worn, and sat there looking steadfastly at the old man, and this one perpendicular lock. Why didn't he cut it off or comb it down? Who was he, and was there any chance that she should

ever know him, and ask him to explain himself? What made his nose and chin so close together, and what big blue eyes he had! No old look in them, certainly, but a steady, abstracted gaze at the minister, as if he had heard and known, long before, all that, and had gone far back into his own mind. But now a great blue-bottle fly, the last of the season, chilled by the cool September air, and which had been feebly crawling over the wall, was suddenly warmed and revived by a ray of sunshine, falling not only on him, but on the old man's bent head, lighting up the pale red of the wig into some life and color. The fly spread his wings and flew to it; crawling all about the top at first, then at last slowly ascending the white lock till at the top it balanced, and slowly opened and shut its wings. Then Dora imagined it bent its head and composed itself in the same attitude of attention as the old man, till suddenly disturbed by an energetic miller, that, flying by, came in collision with the white lock, and upset the meditative fly, which fell and lay on its back, legs in air, striving to turn over. Long ago Dora had forgotten where she was, and now, as she saw the struggling fly, and the miller slowly cir-

cling about, as if considering the situation, she laughed aloud, echoed by Ned, who exploded in his handkerchief, and sat down on the floor of the pew to recover himself.

What a frightened silence! The minister stopped and looked down. The old man turned around, and everybody else moved and rustled in their seats.

"Come here," said Miss Jones, in a distinct whisper, from the front pew; and the unhappy Dora stumbled out, and in dead silence took her place next Miss Jones. Then, as Dr. Stone went on, she sat too overwhelmed to cry, and wondering what judgment would come upon her. Miss Miller had smiled as she passed her, a satisfied sort of smile, as if she were saying, "There! I told you so! She's the worst child I ever saw." Dora felt again that she hated her. Sippy looked virtuous, and Ida frightened, and Dora sat and waited.

Not a word from Miss Jones on the way home, till, as Dora would have turned towards her own room, she said, "No; come into mine." And having reached it, set her down in a low chair, locked the door and left her.

CHAPTER V.

CAUGHT.

"I WON'T cry! I won't cry!" Dora said to herself, trying to keep back the hot tears that now seemed all the time ready to pour out. "Nobody shall see me cry," and she shut her teeth hard together and looked around. There was a table covered with books and papers and a tall, old-fashioned secretary, the upper part also filled with books. She stood up on a stool to look at the titles, but found them all in a language she could not understand. Then she went to the window which overlooked the orchard; but seeing some of the little girls there, drew in her head and went back to her chair. Then she took up a pamphlet lying on the table, Chambers' Miscellany, and turned it over till she came to a story in which she was soon lost—so lost that she did not hear the door open, or know, till Miss Jones touched her, that any one had come in.

"If she can study as hard as she reads," Miss Jones said to herself, "she'll be good for something."

"Why did you laugh out loud in church?" she added, taking the book from her and laying it back on the table.

"Because," said Dora, after a moment's hesitation.

"Because is no answer. Did any one make you laugh?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"One of the little girls?"

"No, ma'am."

"Who then?"

"I don't want to tell."

"But you must tell. What do you suppose the minister thinks of you, laughing out in that way, and making somebody else laugh? Did you forget you were in church?"

"Yes, ma'am."

Miss Jones considered her.

"Now, Dora, I insist upon your telling me why you laughed. I may excuse you if I know. Unless I do know, you can have no dinner."

"I don't want any dinner," said Dora, desper-

ately hungry, but feeling she would rather go without ten dinners than face the girls now.

"Don't you know it disgraces the school for any one in it to do such a thing? Was it anything you saw?"

"It was a fly."

"A fly!" repeated Miss Jones, scornfully, and convinced that Dora could not be telling the truth. "If you had told the truth, I should have taken you down to dinner, and to church this afternoon. Now I shall keep you here till I come back, and then see if you can answer me properly. Why should you deceive me?"

"I haven't," said Dora, on whose cheeks two red spots were beginning to burn, "it was a fly."

"There, there!" said Miss Jones, hastily, "not another word. Take off your bonnet and sit still here till I come back from church. Let the books alone, and think of your sinfulness."

"I won't," said Dora, passionately, as the door closed. "I'll think of yours, and everybody's. I can't stay here. I'll run away. I must tell grandmother I can't stay here."

She sat still, choking down her tears, until the sound of voices in front, and the ringing of the

church bell showed her all were on the way. She listened till there was no sound, and then tried the door. It was locked, and now she began to cry bitter, angry tears, till the resolution came to write. There was plenty of paper, pens, and ink, and Dora had been taught how to fold a letter properly, for it was before the days of envelopes. So she sat down and began her letter:

"DEAR GRANDMOTHER: I did mean to be good, but I can't, because they won't let me. I laughed in church at a fly, and I told Miss Jones I did, and she won't believe me, and has locked me up. I hate Miss Miller, and I can't have any dinner, and I wish you would come and take me away."

Dora wrote slowly, and a long time was spent in finishing this. Then she folded and directed it, and looked about for wafer or wax. Neither was there, and she took a pin and pinned the edges carefully together.

"I'll mail it the next time I go to walk," she thought, and then sat still, wondering how she could bear to live in this place till March. There was a rustling outside the door. Then the key turned softly, and Cynthia's round face showed

itself. Dora had tucked the letter into her bosom at the first sound, and sat now looking flushed and angry. She lighted up on seeing Cynthia.

"How came you here? Didn't you have to go to church?"

"No; my head ached dreadful," said Cynthia, who was really pale and forlorn. "But I couldn't bear to think you hadn't had any dinner. You don't need any taking down, for you're most as thin as a rail now. So I went to the closet and cut a chunk out of your cake. It's yours, anyhow, and you've a right to eat it."

"So I have," said Dora, greatly comforted, and beginning upon it at once.

"You've cried till you look real bunged up," said Cynthia, pityingly. "Why wouldn't you tell Miss Jones what you laughed at?"

"I did," said Dora. "It was a fly. Anybody would have laughed," and she told Cynthia about the old man.

"It was Uncle Sol," said Cynthia. "Uncle Sol Perkins. His wig—that red part's his wig, you goosie—it is all worn out on top, and he won't get a new one. There's a hole that his own hair sticks right out of. He always sits just so. He's

sort of deaf, you know, an' he fought in the Revolution, so he's got plenty to think about when he can't hear. He's seen Washington."

"Oh!" said Dora, delighted, "can we ever speak to him?"

"Yes whenever we go to walk, if he'll let us. Sometimes he will, and sometimes he won't. He lives in that little house way on the back road, all alone, only a boy out of the poor-house. He won't ever let a woman go into his house to do a thing. He hates 'em all."

"What for?" asked Dora, intensely interested.

"I don't know. Some of 'em ought to be hated. Anyway, he won't let any but little girls come in once in a while. Ned Seymour knows him, and goes to hear him tell stories. He'll do it in the evenings, sometimes. Everything he's got is just as tame; his old horse, and his cow, and all; and he says his dog knows a heap more'n the common run of people."

Dora made an inward resolution to go there as soon as possible, and finished her cake with the greatest relish. Cynthia stole away, locking the door after her, and very soon the sound of the girls' voices was heard, and Miss Jones came in.

"Possibly the child didn't lie," she had said to herself in church time. "She looked truthful enough. In any case I'll let it go this time. If it's in her it will come out soon enough."

So, as Dora looked up, prepared for more questions, and determined to say nothing more than she had done, Miss Jones simply said:

"You may go now, Dora, and try not to get me into trouble another Sunday."

That was a new view of the case.

"Did I get you into trouble?" said Dora. "I only meant to get myself in. I mean I didn't know anybody was in but me."

Miss Jones smiled.

"We won't talk about it any more," she said, "but next Sunday listen to the sermon, and don't look at anything that will make you forget yourself so."

"No ma'am," said Dora, astonished at her own meekness, and going back to her room, where Ida and Clem sat on the bed studying the new hymn they were all to sing together after tea.

"Only think of getting into a scrape the very first Sunday," said Sippy, through the knot-hole, whereat Ida stuffed it up with paper, and said, "Don't you mind her, Dora."

Dora felt happier, and that evening added a postscript to her letter:

"I feel better to-night. They didn't make any more fuss, and I guess I shall be good. Give my love to Mr. Osgood and Jack. I had some of my cake, and my supper, so I am not hungry."

This letter, pin and all, she mailed privately, while walking the next day, and in due time Mr. Osgood took it from the much amazed clerk at the post-office, and carried it home to grandmother.

"Not an authorized edition, evidently," he said, laughing. "Dora must be in trouble of some sort."

"We'll all write to her, and tell her she must be careful," said grandmother, anxiously, after the tear-blotted little scrawl had been made out.

"No," said grandfather, "I think I shall pay very little attention to it now, only write her a letter of news, and tell her how much we miss her. She broods over things too much already."

"That is the best way I am sure," said Mr. Osgood. And so when Dora, a few days later, received two or three letters from home, she was surprised to find no mention of her trouble.

"Don't forget what the ring has to say to you," wrote Mr. Osgood, "and remember how eagerly we shall look for you when vacation time comes. And don't forget the best Friend of all, who will help you over all the rough places."

Dora cried a little as she read this, written in such a large, clear hand, that every word was plain as print. But she was growing happier every day. Lessons came very easily to her, and her quick eager mind found study a pleasure, and Miss Jones's explanations of everything delightful. Cynthia, who was her desk-mate, plodded through, an anxious pucker on her forehead, and gave the wildest answers, shifting about the facts of her lessons like a game in "Consequences," or the more modern "Cross Purposes." Miss Miller delighted in mixing her up, and Dora, indignant at what seemed to her meanness, often prompted and helped her out. There were other times when, seeing her hopelessly floundering, the spirit of mischief entered in and did as he willed.

"What did General Stark say at the battle of Bennington?" asked Miss Miller, one day, in the history class.

"He said—he said—he—" began Cynthia.

"E pluribus unum, don't give up the ship," whispered Dora.

"He said, 'E pleurisy unum, don't give up the ship,'" repeated Cynthia, with animation.

"Next," said Miss Miller, indignantly, and Cynthia's round eyes turned with a surprised look upon Dora. Presently her turn came again.

"What were General Stark's principal battles."

"Waterloo and Flodden Field," prompted from behind; and Cynthia, remembering Bennington, decided she would make a success this time, and answered briskly,

"Waterloo, Bennington, and Flodden Field."

"Cynthia Bostwick," said Miss Miller, laying down her book, "you never got such answers out of your own head. It's insulting. Who prompted you?"

"Weren't they right?" asked Cynthia, not believing Dora could have so imposed upon her.

"Right!" said Miss Miller, shutting her book. "Stay after school and recite this lesson. I shall find out who puts you up to this sort of thing."

Dora, shaking behind her geography, hesitated whether to own up or not; but, remembering that Cynthia had to stay in at least every other day, kept still.

"Oh, you're mean as dirt," said Cynthia, as she passed her at recess. "I wouldn't cheat a cat so."

"Well, you've no business to be prompted, any way," said Dora. "You might learn your lessons better. What's the reason you don't?"

"I can't," said Cynthia, desperately, sitting down on a log. "I ain't fit for anything but to be an awful example. Miss Jones says my brains are made of hasty pudding. I do believe they are. And when Miss Jones puts out one of those awful messes in Colburn, and says, 'Now Cynthia,' I feel just as if I was being whirled right round and round. I wonder what's the reason I can remember everything but lessons. You always know yours."

"We might sit together in study hours," said Dora, after a few moments' repentance, "and I'd help you. I'll hear you say them, and may be you'll get more of them into your head than you do now."

"Will you?" said Cynthia, delighted. "But what'll Ida say?"

"What about?" asked Ida, who came up just then.

"Why, I want you to change places with Cynthia, and let her study at my desk. You'd just as soon sit by Clem, hadn't you?"

"Oh, very well," said Ida, "I always thought you didn't care anything about me, Dora Maynard, for all you pretended you did. I wish I could change rooms as easy as I can change seats," and, drawing her dress carefully around her, so that no fold of it might chance to touch Dora, she put her arm around the gratified Sippy and sailed away.

There were more reasons than the present for Ida's change of feeling. In their last Saturday's walk to Bantam River, Franky Kinnicutt and Ned Seymour had both deserted her for Dora, who, in the wildest of spirits, had told stories, and climbed trees, and skipped stones with such startling success that Ida had been devoured with jealousy all the way home. A treat of ginger cakes for the whole party, the result of two of Dora's five-cent pieces, had not helped in the least. Ida ate her share, because at any time she would have eaten anything in the shape of goodies from the hand of her bitterest enemy; but in her heart she vowed war against Dora, and only waited the best time for declaring it.

"I won't change if you don't want me to," Dora cried after her, the sole answer to which was the very worst face Ida could think of, imitated to the best of her ability by Sippy.

Now began a series of small persecutions which nearly drove Dora beside herself. Ida would not speak to her in the room, but confined her conversation to Sippy and Clem through the knothole. She threw Dora's dresses on the closet floor, disarranged her drawers, altered all the little ornamental arrangements of the room, never allowed her a moment alone, and joggled the table until her journal was a series of blots. Cynthia, whom nothing troubled but lessons, went on her way serenely; but Dora, eager to be liked, and having grown really fond of Ida, mourned over the matter, and filled pages of her journal with apostrophes to betrayed friendship, and declarations that she was now ready for the silent tomb. But Miss Jones kept them all so busy that there was small time for much lamentation. Temptations had come often enough to begin some large story; in fact, one or two had been begun but the influence of the ring was still powerful enough to prevent their completion. On the

whole Dora was happy, and, though homesick at night, when she was shut up with Ida, managed to throw it off through the day.

All this time she had never succeeded in speaking to Uncle Sol; or, rather, had never succeeded in making him speak to her. She had passed the little brown house in their afternoon walks, and sometimes met him going to the village; but he looked neither to right nor left. But Dora had full faith that the mine of stories he represented would some day be opened. She had found that only a meadow lay between his ground and Miss Jones's orchard, and often crossed it to look at his bee-hives, which were in a half-circle under some locust trees. "Only a meadow," I said, but it was really a pasture, rising at one side into rocky ledges, and everywhere deep in sweet fern and everlasting. Dora liked to jump into this sweet fern, and smell the warm spicy air which rose around her, and against one gray old rock where it grew thickest, she had piled it up, making a sort of arm-chair. Here she brought her stockings to mend when Miss Jones would allow it, though October was stealing all the warmth from the shortening days. But she read, or made

pictures of what she should do when a woman, or sometimes brought some favored little girl with her, and told her bits of all the strange things she had read. You will wonder that in a boarding-school such liberty should be given; but Miss Jones, out of school and study hours, allowed them to do very much as they chose, so long as the employment was an innocent one.

This afternoon Dora had piloted Cynthia through a maze of mental arithmetic, had fixed in her mind that Kamschatka was *not* in South America, and, rather tired with her exertions, took "Evenings at Home," from the school-room book shelves, and went out to her own place. The afternoon's sun shone down warmly, and she settled down on the fern with the comfortable feeling that the worst of her week's work was done. Sitting there, she could see Uncle Sol's windows, which were all open. Evidently he was house-cleaning, for quilts and blankets were piled in them, and a feather bed had tumbled out and lay on the ground.

"I've a great mind to go over there and just peep in," said Dora, with whom to think was to act. In two minutes she had climbed the fence,

and was creeping up the garden, dreading lest he should come out and see her, and shrinking back at every sound. Guided by the splashing and pounding in front, she stood on tip-toe and looked in at one of the windows. Uncle Sol, with shirt sleeves rolled up, was scrubbing his parlor floor, bringing the brush down as if it had been a hammer. By the window stood a gun and sword, evidently taken down from some nails over the mantel-piece, where lay some curious shells and stones. Absorbed in his work, he heard nothing, and Dora, gaining courage, reached forward and touched the scabbard. It must have been badly balanced, for as she touched it, it fell, and Uncle Sol, turning in dismay, saw a shadow at his window.

"Those tarnation boys," he said, running out, scrubbing brush in hand.

Dora had no time to escape to her own ground. Beside her was the open cellar way, and she dashed down the steps and into the darkest corner behind some barrels. Uncle Sol looked around a moment.

"There ain't no signs of nobody," he said, and shutting the two big cellar-doors, returned to his scrubbing.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM DARK TO DAYLIGHT.

FOR a moment Dora was breathless. She heard Uncle Sol's heavy tread overhead, and expected the door at the head of the stairs would open, and search be made for the disturber. But as the scrubbing went on, she gained a little courage and looked about her. The cellar was not dark, for a window at the end, not yet banked up with leaves, let in a pale light through its cobwebbed panes. She could see a row of barrels on one side; cider barrels they must be, for Uncle Sol's cider was famous. There were bins near her. Apples of all sorts, she knew by the smell, but she had small wish to investigate. She crept softly to the cellar steps, and tried the great doors, pushing with all her strength; then finding them firm, sat down and tried to think what should be done. To walk boldly up stairs into

the kitchen, face Uncle Sol, and tell the whole story, was the practical thing, but the last thought that came to Dora, who climbed on a barrel hoping to reach the cellar window, but found it still too far above her. Then she returned to her first post, and sitting down on a box behind the barrels, waited, hoping that by and by, when the scrubbing was done, Uncle Sol would go out to milk, and leave an opening for her. So she sat quietly on the box, not daring to move about, lest he should hear her, and wondering what excuse could be made to Miss Jones. It was almost sunset, she knew, and very soon the first bell for tea would ring. What should she do? They would think she had run away, and might lock her up on bread and water, as Sippy Smith had been the term before. Or suppose Uncle Sol staid in, and night came before she could get out. Dora looked over toward the end of the cellar where stood a long line of cobwebbed barrels, hardly to be seen now in the settling shadows. How soon it would be dark!—ānd there was certainly something moving over them.

"Ida said there was a ghost here," she thought, looking with great, frightened eyes toward the corner. "Oh! what shall I do?"

Dora was almost ready to scream, and as the rustling increased, grew pale with fear. A shadow moved on the wall; something, still behind the barrels, crept stealthily nearer her; then she saw the gleam of something white, and with a great cry sprang up the cellar stairs, and beat upon the door with both hands!

Uncle Sol dropped his scrubbing-brush, and lifted himself up. "Tain't cats!" he said, slowly moving toward the kitchen, and standing still a moment in amazement, as the pounding continued. Then he opened the door, just in season, for Dora, for the first time in her life, had fainted, and lay in a little heap on the landing at the head of the stairs, while the white cat stood over her mewing, as if repenting his share in the difficulty.

"For the land's sake!" said Uncle Sol. "A gal in my cellar! For the land's sake!" And then lifting her up he carried her into a little bedroom opening from the kitchen, and laying her on the bed, stood looking at her.

"She ain't dead," he said, presently, putting his hand on her heart, and feeling the beating. "She's gone off and she's got to be brung to. Burnt feather is what does it, I've heard say."

Looking about, he saw the turkey wing hanging by the kitchen chimney, and having put one end among the coals, returned in a moment, holding it and a dipper of cold water. Sprinkling her face with one hand, with the other he held the burning wing under her nose, while Dora, gasping and barely conscious, turned from side to side to escape the fearful smell, and at last sat up and looked about her.

"That's right," said Uncle Sol, encouragingly, waving the wing before her. "Now what do you want?"

Dora, still half dazed, looked at him a moment; then, beginning to realize the situation, tried to get off from the bed, saying faintly:

"I want to go home."

"Jest keep still," said Uncle Sol, severely, putting her back again with one turn of his great hand. "You ain't no ways fit yet awhile, let alone that I'm going to find out how you got in. Was you going to suck my cider?"

Dora turned away indignantly.

"Squirming ain't no sign you wasn't. Gals is most as outrageous as boys, now-a-days. May be you wanted apples. You might better a come

and asked for some, than tried to take 'em. Stealing ain't no way."

"I didn't want your cider, or your apples, either," Dora found voice to say. "I never thought of such a thing. I wanted to see your sword and gun."

"They ain't down cellar," said the old man, suspiciously.

"You locked me down there. I ran in to get away from you."

"For sure!" said Uncle Sol, on whom light was beginning to dawn. "Was that you that knocked 'em over? Well, well! Who be you, anyway? Now there's 'Liphalet come for the milk-pail. Don't you get up now. Jest keep still till I come back."

Dora looked at his tall figure shuffling across the kitchen, and, half crying, wondered what she should do. Perhaps there would be time to run before he got back; and with this hope she slid from the bed, and was part way to the door, when she stood still in dismay, for Ned Seymour's whistle sounded on the threshold, and in a moment he faced her. The whistle died out in a long "Whew!" and Ned, sending his hands to

the bottom of his pockets, stood and looked at her fixedly.

"I must get back to the house," began Dora, in tears. "I know it's after tea time, and I don't know what they will say to me."

"Sit down," said Uncle Sol, returning, "Ned Seymour, you'd better go home. This little gal an' me's got to have some talk together."

"You and Miss Jones'll have to have some talk together, if you keep her," said Ned. "It's Dora Maynard from the school."

"Ha!" said Uncle Sol. "That's the little gal that laughed in meetin'. I heerd ye. An' now you've run away. Well, well! Well, they've had their tea up there, so you'll have to have something here."

Ned's eyes opened.

"That's more'n he ever did for anybody before," he whispered, as Uncle Sol disappeared in a big buttery. "Now, Dora, how did you get here?"

"I'll tell you some other time," Dora began.

"She needn't tell nothin' till after she's had a bite of something," said Uncle Sol, appearing with a pan of doughnuts and a great piece of sage cheese. "Now which had you rather have, cider or metheglin?"

"Metheglin," said Dora, after a moment's reflection, remembering Ivanhoe, and how she had wanted to know when reading it what metheglin was.

Uncle Sol nodded approvingly and disappeared again. Dora heard a jingling of glasses, and he came in in a moment with two long slender wine glasses and a tall pewter cup.

"Pewter wouldn't do for you," he said. "Draw up, now, and I'll fetch some cider."

In a few moments more Uncle Sol had brought in two pitchers, and standing before the table, took off his hat and asked a blessing in a loud voice, as if he were afraid of not being heard. Then he filled Dora's glass with a dirty gray liquid, looking just like dish-water, she wrote to Jack, afterwards, and tasting like sweetened dish-water with a little pepper in it. Dora tasted, and tasted again, trying to like it, but losing respect at once for Ivanhoe's taste.

"Don't hanker arter it, eh?" said Uncle Sol, whose countenance had fallen a little. "Well, there's cider, or the water pail. Take whatever ye like best."

"I'm sorry," said Dora, making a final effort to swallow it. "I thought I should like it."

"You beat all the old women in town on doughnuts," said Ned, beginning on his second, while Dora, tasting hers, decided nothing could be better. "Don't you eat bread Uncle Sol?"

"Eat it with my beans; but doughnuts is best for a steady diet. Livin' on rotten crackers an' bread, going on three years, kind of sot me against it, so't I don't make it more'n once a week or so."

"What did you have to do that for?" said Dora.

"'Cause the Britishers wouldn't give us anything better," said Uncle Sol. "I was in the old 'sugar house,' you see."

"Oh! won't you tell about it?" Dora begged.

"Not this time. But you come down some Saturday afternoon, an' I'll tell you the whole. What made you screech out so when you was down cellar?"

"I got frightened," said Dora, determined never to tell Ned what she thought she had seen. "It was getting dark, and I wanted to get out."

"You skeered General Washington bad enough," said Uncle Sol. "He flew out as if he was sent, when I opened the door. See! his tail's big yet."

Dora looked around to see a great white cat sitting on the rug, and colored furiously as she thought what she had supposed it to be.

"Now you'd better go," said Uncle Sol. "Put some doughnuts in your pocket; for may be they'll lock you up; and don't you tell where you've been, for I can't have everybody coming here."

"I must tell Miss Jones," said Dora.

"Well, that's different. But don't you be bringing a lot of strange children here. You can come, yourself, if you've a mind to."

"Thank you, sir," said Dora, gratefully, laying her hand in his for a moment. Then she went out into the porch, shrinking back a little, as she saw how dark it had grown.

"I'll go to the door with you," said Ned, "and then cut before Miss Jones sees me. There's somebody coming down the path now. Let's hide behind this bush."

Dora crouched down, without in the least thinking why, and in a moment old Mr. Jones passed them hurriedly, and went on to Uncle Sol's.

"Mr. Jones! Mr. Jones!" Dora called, springing from her hiding place, "I'm here. Let me go with you."

Ned jumped over the fence and ran up toward his own home, and Dora stood still, waiting for for Mr. Jones, who came up hurriedly.

"My dear child! how you have frightened us! Where have you been? Do you know half a dozen people are out looking for you?"

"I couldn't help it," Dora said, repentantly, and telling her story at once as they walked on. But as she came nearer the house, and saw lights moving from room to room, and a knot of people on the door-step, her courage failed, and she sat down on a stone.

"I can't go in. I'm not going in," she said, vehemently; and Mr. Jones, too gentle to make her, after a few moments' persuasion, walked in and left her there.

In the mean time there had been weeping and wailing among the little girls, and some consternation among the older ones.

"Where is Dora Maynard?" Miss Jones asked, as the little girls stood up before her for inspection.

"She wasn't in our room at all," Ida began, eagerly glad to have something to tell. "I guess she's reading a novel up in the hay, and didn't hear the bell."

"You know better," returned Cynthia. "It's so dark in the barn now you couldn't see a thing."

"May be she's tumbled through a hole," said Sippy, remembering her own experience, "and can't get out."

Miss Jones walked into the kitchen.

"Hannah, I wish you would look around for Dora Maynard," the girls heard her say, and then she came back and took her place. Five—ten minutes passed, and then Hannah came to the door.

"She ain't high nor low, nor anywheres, mum, in the house nor out of it."

Miss Jones turned a little pale and stood up, while Ellen Woodland screamed faintly, and Ida began to cry.

"She's run away, I know she has. She said she'd run away the last time I knocked down her sugar bird."

"Ida's plagued her so I should think she would want to run away," said Sippy. "She plagues her all the time."

"Finish your suppers, girls, and then go to the school-room," said Miss Jones. "Hannah, go over and see if she is at the Seymour's, and if she is not, ask Mr. Seymour to come in."

For an hour and more confusion reigned. The little girls cried, and even Miss Miller looked disturbed. Then old Mr. Jones was heard in the hall, saying something about Dora, and in another minute Miss Jones exclaimed, as she pulled her in:

"You naughty child! You are enough to try the patience of Job. Go right to bed, and I'll see to you by and by."

"She'll whip her," said Sippy.

"No she won't," said Ida; "she never whips anybody. But I'd rather be whipped than hear the way she talks sometimes."

Dora thought so, too, when, after crawling into bed, she waited her coming. But, having determined to tell the whole story, even including the ghost, she did so at once, after Miss Jones's first question, losing courage somewhat in the dead silence in which she was heard, but still going on to the very end.

"So you promised to tell no one but me?" said Miss Jones, after shaking in a curious way a few moments. "Well, you must fight that out with the little girls. You seem to have been as badly frightened as we were, so that matter is balanced."

"Then you won't give me a tardy mark?" said Dora, who had been trying very hard to gain the prize for punctuality given at the end of the term.

"Not this time," said Miss Jones. "Now good-night, Dora. You'll have to get up earlier to-morrow to make up for this lost study hour."

"Yes, ma'am," Dora said, delighted, feeling about, as soon as she had gone, for the two doughnuts Uncle Sol had given her, and eating them with the greatest appetite.

Ida cried over her when she came to bed, but hardened her heart again as Dora declined to tell her where she had been. Miss Jones had simply said that she had strayed away and got lost, and Ida implored to know where and how, till Dora did not know what to do. It was still harder next day to resist Cynthia, and Dolly, and all the rest who flocked about her, but finding her firm, they at last gave up questioning, though at intervals for weeks afterward, the conundrum came up.

"Where do you suppose Dora Maynard was that night?"

Dora, unable to relieve her mind to the little

girls, confided all to her journal, wherein, I regret to say, the cat was made to figure as "a dreadful creature with great eyes, all in white, that flew at me," and Uncle Sol was set down as having rushed at it with his sword, when it disappeared in a flash of blue light. She wanted to write the whole to Jack, but as she was allowed to send but one letter a week, decided when Jack's turn came, that she had rather tell than write him, and so contented herself with describing her interview with Uncle Sol, and giving her opinion that honey might much better be eaten on bread than made into metheglin.

Getting over to Uncle Sol's again grew more and more difficult, for Cynthia was constant as a shadow, and Dora began to think she should never hear about the "sugar house." She saw him at church every Sunday, but he looked right over her head in coming out, as if he had never even heard of her, though now she always spoke to him.

October slid into November, and Thanksgiving came nearer and nearer. The Governor's proclamation had been read, and Dora, as she listened, thought with a sigh of grandfather's, and the

wonderful bakings, and roastings, and boilings which went on there. Cynthia groaned as she told how much mince-pie she could eat, and wished Miss Jones would give them a week's vacation, so that she could for once get filled up.

"I'm hungry the whole blessed time," she said, one afternoon, as they were all sitting in the hay.

"And there's that last cake ma sent me, down in the closet, and I haven't had a mite. It's a shame."

"Look here," said Dolly Baldwin, confidentially, "the door isn't ever locked. Any of us could get it any night, and eat it up before morning. 'Tisn't a big cake. Or we could put what was left between the beds, and eat it any time. I say, who'd dare go down in the night and get it?"

"I wouldn't," said Ida. "It's horrid to be going all round in the dark. I wouldn't do it for all the cake that ever was made."

"I would," said Dora. "I go everywhere in the dark at home, and never mind it a bit. Why, once I went right down cellar in the night and got something for grandma."

"Did you?" said Clem, doubtfully. "Well, will you get the cake?"

"Why, yes," said Dora, "only are you sure it

isn't stealing? What'll you say to Miss Jones when she finds it's gone?"

"Tell her rats got it," said Ida.

"Don't tell her anything, and may be she'll never think about it again," said Clem. "She does forget things sometimes."

"But you must all promise not to tell," said Cynthia. "Of course it isn't stealing, Dora, to take your own things. Look here! let's be a secret society, just the way they do in colleges, you know. My brother's in one. We'll have it for just our own, and not let in anybody else."

"Oh, yes!" said Dora, rather envying Cynthia for her original suggestion. "What'll we do though? I tell you what we'll do. We'll call ourselves the 'Starvation Club,' and we'll get things out of that closet whenever we can, and have midnight meetings, you know, and eat 'em."

"Who'll get 'em?" asked Clem.

"Oh, Dora," said Cynthia, "because she isn't afraid of the dark, you know. She'd better be president, because presidents always do the hardest things, and I'll be vice-president, 'cause the most of the cake's mine."

"I must be something," said Ida.

"And I too," said Sippy. "And I!" "and I!" "and I!" came from all the other little girls.

"You can't all be officers," said Dora, "because there's got to be some members. I'd just as soon be a member. Somebody else can be president."

"Oh, no, because you're the only that isn't afraid," said Ida.

Dora, who sought to escape her honors, sat still, wishing she had not boasted.

"Don't you remember how Ellen Woodland was reciting to-day about their voting in Athens with white and black balls?" said Clem. "We can take beans. Let's vote right away."

So, after a raid upon the beans, a meeting was held in the hay-loft, the kittens overseeing, resulting in the election of everybody to something. For, when four officers had been fixed upon, the four members vowed they would secede and have nothing to do with it, unless they were at once given some rank. Two presidents, two vice-presidents, two treasurers, and two secretaries, at last organized, and, with unanimous quarreling, agreed to meet that night in Dora's room.

"Goodness!" said Cynthia, as they went in to tea; "I'm sure I wish we could have got the cake without the club. I don't see any fun in it."

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRESIDENT AND MISS BETSEY.

BED-TIME came, and Dora, mindful of her new duties as president, tried to keep awake till every sound should cease. But even when a peep into the hall showed that Miss Jones's light was out, there were in all directions such mysterious creakings and crackings that every reason for giving up came to her mind. On the whole it must be a sort of stealing, for all knew Miss Jones's rules.

"If Miss Jones ate the things herself, it would be different; but she doesn't. We all have some. I guess I won't try to-night, anyway." And, well pleased to be free from the undertaking, she fell asleep.

Dark looks greeted her the next morning. Ida said she "always knew she was afraid, for all she pretended not to be;" and Clem and Sippy of course seconded the remark.

"I won't steal for anybody," Dora answered, in so loud a tone that Miss Miller, who unexpectedly came in sight, pricked up her ears and half stopped.

"Now you've done it," said Clem.

"No I haven't. She didn't hear all I said. Anyway, I won't do it, without thinking more about it."

"And may be it'll be on the table this very night," said Cynthia, mournfully, "and we only get a crumb apiece. I don't see why you can't take it in the day-time, when there isn't anybody in the dining-room. I'm a great mind to try myself."

"Well," said Dora much relieved, "I wish you would. And I don't care whether I have any or not."

"As if anybody would believe that!" Cynthia said, nodding wisely, as she went towards the school-room.

It was a raw, miserable November morning, and, after breakfast, instead of walking, the girls were sent to the gymnasium and told to exercise till the school-bell rang.

Dora presently tired of swings and climbings,

and, standing in the door, looked down toward the brook, marked now by a black line of alders, on which the frost still glistened. It was one of her blue days, wherein she longed for home, and a talk with those who knew her best. How she wanted grandfather and mother, and how good it would seem to hear Mr. Osgood's kind, quiet voice again, and tell him all her troubles.

For Dora had a good many of which I have said nothing. To begin with, she had no real companion among the little girls; for her mind was far more developed than theirs, and the lessons over which they plodded, were learned by her in a third the time. Much as she wanted to be liked, her quick temper, and a keen tongue, which said often sharper things than she meant, brought her into many difficulties with everybody save Cynthia, who could not have borne malice against even a deadly enemy. Against Miss Miller she had the very strongest prejudice, and I am afraid justly. For that young lady never lost an opportunity of stirring her up; bewildered her in her lessons, and accused her of intentions she had never dreamed of having, till Dora, at times half beside herself, gave the wildest reasons

for her conduct, or answered so impertinently that all the class were shocked.

There were minutes when she hated even Miss Jones, for the sudden way in which she roused her from dreamy fits deeper than Miss Woodland's. Mental arithmetic was Dora's special abomination, and Miss Jones's special delight. She looked upon it as the only cure for abstraction and inattention, and kept all her romantic aud sentimental pupils in its very depths. Dora's Colburn was strangely battered and bruised, and nobody would have wondered, could they have seen it fly against the wall, or watched the war dance executed upon it, when her feelings grew too much for her. And the worst of it was that however well the lesson might be learned, after sitting a few minutes in the class, laughing perhaps at Cynthia's extraordinary statements, she was almost certain to go off in a reverie over some pleasant thought of the past, or hope for the future, till Miss Jones, exasperated, either marked her imperfect, and heard the lesson after school, or, what was much worse, laid down the book, folded her arms, and, rolling up her eyes, looked steadfastly at the ceiling till the dead silence brought Dora back to every-day life.

"*So* difficult to fix one's finer thoughts on fractions," she would murmur, as she took up the book again, while Dora, dyed with blushes, wished either to sink through the floor, or annihilate Miss Jones on the spot.

If she could have written home freely, I think matters would have been better with her; but only one letter a week could she send, and that, in the case of the little girls, must be read by Miss Jones, who corrected spelling, etc.—a hard rule, which, years after, she altered, but too late for Dora, whose journal was her only comfort. In it she wrote the fullest opinions on everything: school-mates, teachers, books, lessons, politics. There were her rhymes, and the outlines of stories she wanted to write some day, and there were tender little thoughts, almost too sacred for words, but written because she had no friend dear enough to whom they could be told. She blessed the giver of the thick book with its smooth pages, filling steadily, but still slowly enough to make her sure there would be room for all she could say for at least another year. Generally she kept it in the bottom of her trunk, the key of which she always carried, so that no

one could possibly get at it; but this morning, standing in the open door, she remembered with a sudden start that she had only slipped it into her drawer when called unexpectedly, and that it was Miss Miller's day for looking in all the drawers, and giving marks good or bad, according to the condition in which they were found.

"She couldn't be mean enough to read it," Dora said to herself, adding at once, "but she could; she's mean enough for anything, I know."

It was against the rules to leave the gymnasium till the bell rang, unless special permission was given; but Dora was too anxious to think of this, or to care if she had thought, and ran at once to the house, and up the back stairs. Down the passage way she crept, softly as her thick boots would allow, and as softly turned the handle of her door. Nobody there, and pulling open the drawer, she looked at the corner where the journal should have been, but saw nothing.

"May be I did put it back, after all," she thought: and kneeling down by her trnnk, unlocked it, took out the tray and felt in the old corner. Still nothing.

Dora's mouth shut hard as once more she

closed the trunk and went into the hall. There was a murmur of voices from the big girl's room, and she remembered that Maria Baldwin had stayed in bed that morning because of a heavy cold. She crept toward the room, the door of which stood ajar, and looked in. Maria sat up in bed eating her breakfast, and at the foot was Miss Miller, reading, with appropriate gestures, from a book which Dora knew at once.

For a minute she was dumb with rage; and as she stood there, Miss Miller, turning over the leaves, said:

"Oh, here's poetry! Now for some more fun," and declaimed in a loud voice:

"Oh! mother dear, if I only might,
In the midst of sunshine sweet and bright
Walk once again in my beautiful wood,
And talk to my dearest Mr. Osgood,
I know I should feel like a different child;
I know 'twould be easier far to be mild.
But now how I hate that awful Miss Miller;
I wish in a lake of black ink I could spill her,
With a vulture or eagle to hold by her hair,
And keep her from drowning, but keep her just there."

"Well, Miller, you *are* catching it," began Maria, but screamed and dropped her tea-cup,

as, with a sort of howl, Dora burst into the room and seized first the book and then Miss Miller's long curls. Letting go these as the enemy's hand came up and boxed her ears, she flew at it and fastened her teeth in it. Then, as the blood spurted out sickeningly, and Maria caught her, wrenched herself away and fled to her room.

The school-bell rang before there was time to lock the door, and with white face and blazing eyes she went into the school-room and took her place.

"Don't she look awful?" whispered Fatty. "I wonder if anybody's dead?"

Miss Jones in the mean time, having heard the two screams, had gone at once to inquire into the case, and hearing simply that Dora, whose drawers had been marked for untidiness, had flown at Miss Miller like a young wild-cat, returned to the school-room at once, but did not care that any school difficulties should be known to the visitor who sat upon the platform; a visitor in whom all the girls, but especially the older ones, felt a very tender interest.

How it is in these days I do not know; but twenty years ago every well regulated school had

more or less to do with the sewing circles and missionary societies of the church which they attended. Dr. Stone's church was famous for educating young men for the ministry; or, rather, producing the necessary money for such education, together with wardrobes, which, as far as possible, were made in the sewing society. The "church beneficiary," the object of their favor was called by everybody. "Benny Fishentary," the little girls rendered it, with a vague idea it had something to do with his college name, though the young gentleman who sat before them now was plain Isaac Thompson, home for Thanksgiving. Not plain Isaac Thompson, either, for a year in the Theological Seminary had developed an extremely high white cravat and a tendency to part his hair in the middle. Dora, who had run into him in the hall a few days before, had dubbed him "Miss Betsey" on the spot, and persisted in calling him so, to the intense scandal of Miss Woodland, who had worked button holes enthusiastically in his last set of shirts made up in the society, and who thought the gold spectacles, even, could never dim the saintly expression of his rather chalky and beardless face. Dora, as

her share of work, had knit a pair of stockings; or, rather, finished a pair already begun for him, and in a spirit of contrariness had carefully arranged a pin in each toe in such a manner that it would clearly manifest itself when the stockings were drawn on.

Sitting there now, she remembered that Miss Miller was said to have a special interest in him, and was thankful as she thought of the pins, only wishing there had been a dozen.

School opened in the usual way, save that Miss Betsey, and not Miss Jones, read prayers. Dora knelt down with the rest, but heard hardly a word. Then the morning's work began, and presently the class in mental arithmetic was called. She took her place at the very foot, where she had been sent yesterday for inattention, and at first listened, or tried to listen. But as Dolly blundered on, and then Cynthia's turn came, and the customary insanity of her answers, she wandered away again, and sat steadfastly gazing at the point of Miss Betsey's long thin nose, but with small thought of him in her sad little mind. Miss Betsey, easily embarrassed, blushed to his ears, looked uneasily around, and at last, some-

what indignant at the steady gaze, stared back again with a good deal of anger, quite lost on Dora.

Her turn came at last.

"Add $\frac{6}{9}$ and $\frac{5}{7}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$," said Miss Jones.

No sign of hearing from Dora.

"$\frac{6}{9}$, $\frac{5}{7}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$," repeated Miss Jones.

Still no answer.

"Add together!" said Miss Jones, bringing her hand down with a thump which made Dora start and see that all were looking at her, "$\frac{6}{9}$ of contemptible make-believe, don't hear-ative-ness, and $\frac{5}{7}$ of obstinacy, and $\frac{2}{3}$ of a young tiger, that might be a decent girl if she chose. What do they make?"

Miss Jones had forgotten herself. So had Dora, who looked at her with those same blazing eyes, and then at Miss Betsey, who sat watching her with a weak, mean little smile on his face. The sneer was more than she could bear.

"They make—I don't care one straw what they make!" she said, furiously, rising up and throwing her Colburn from her straight at those maddening gold spectacles and the mean critical eyes behind them. Mr. Thompson dodged; but

there was no need, for the Colburn missed its aim, turned aside by the corner of Ellen Woodland's desk, but taking her ink-stand instead; spattering door and wall and leaving a black page in an exercise book. There was a moment of dreadful silence, broken only by a frightened giggle from Cynthia. Then Miss Jones spoke.

"You are a disgrace to the school. You have insulted our visitor as well as me, by such conduct. Go down on your knees and beg pardon."

Not a word from Dora, but a look which gave small hint of obedience.

"Obey me!" said Miss Jones, now as pale as Dora.

"By no means," said Miss Betsey, rising, "I could not think of it. She's crazy. I must go—I really must," and, despite Miss Jones's urgent request that he would stay, he made his way out. Then she took Dora's arm, led her up garret to a small empty room, pushed her in, locked the door and left her.

The hours went by. At first, raging inwardly, Dora sat down in the only chair, and tried to think what she had done; but with the thinking grew desperate, and ran round and

round the room like a wild animal, moaning and crying aloud. But soon this ended, and she sat down again, cold and silent, and resting her head against the wall, wished she could die. What better thing was there to do? Old Romans opened their own veins, and let life go from them quietly. Why should not she? There was a penknife in her pocket, and she opened it and looked at the sharp, narrow blade, and pricked her hand hard, wondering how great would be the pain of a sudden stab. You wonder if she did not think how wicked this all was? Not a bit of it. Eager, passionate children, like Dora, and many another one, have such thoughts often when their sorrows come; and who ever reads now the life of Frederika Bremer, one of the sweetest, truest souls that ever lived, will find that just such states of mind came to her not once alone, but many times.

Dora, sitting there, thought no living being had ever been so wretched, and again gave herself a harder prick in one of the blue veins of her wrist. This time a great drop of blood came, and then another, and seeing them she grew frightened lest perhaps she had succeeded, and

wound her handkerchief about the cut. Somebody opened the door and threw in a thick shawl, but Dora would not pick it up.

"I won't kill myself," she thought, "but I'll take cold and have consumption, like Alice Robbins. I shall lie in a little white bed, with fruit and flowers always by me, and Miss Jones will come and ask me to forgive her. I shall do it then, of course, but in a dignified way, like this, 'Rise—I forgive you'," and Dora closed her eyes, and waved her hand toward the imaginary Miss Jones. There was comfort in this—so much comfort that the worst misery was passing away.

So with plans for a striking death-bed, the morning went by, and the dinner-bell rang. Hannah came up with a slice of bread and glass of water, and Dora, whose fury revived on seeing the look of horror with which she was examined, took up the tumbler and plate and threw them from the window. Starvation might be an easier death than any. Certainly she was not hungry now, and felt as if she never could be. But if starvation was the way, it might as well be done comfortably. She picked up the shawl, rolled it

around her and sat down again by the window. Then a new thought came. Suppose Miss Jones should insist on seeing the journal, the cause of so much trouble. She had put it hastily into her trunk when the school-bell rang, but there was no way of getting it now. Well, things must go as they would, and, slipping to the floor and laying her head on the chair, Dora fell asleep, worn out with the war within her.

It was evening when she woke again from a dream of hearing the old church-bell of Windsor ringing. But it was not church-bells. Only the tea-bell, and the sound of feet going down the stairs. It was dark in the room, with heavy shadows in the corners. Dora was thankful there was no furniture under which unknown terrors could creep or glide. She had always dreaded the dark, though grandfather and mother, as well as Mr. Osgood, had tried to overcome the fear in her. But they had never forced her to be alone in it, believing that time and common sense, as well as faith, would come to her aid, and do away with superstition.

Dora looked watchfully about the room, shivering now more with fear than cold, and wondering

if she was to be kept here all night. It seemed so, for the twilight grew deeper, till she could barely see the outline of the window. By and by there were noises underneath, in or near her room, she knew. The opening and shutting of drawers, and moving of something heavy. Then another silence, broken soon by a scratching in the wall. Suppose it should be a rat! A mouse was nothing to fear. She had fed and tamed mice at home, but a rat was awful. Dora pulled the shawl over her head, and sat there trembling. The scratching went on; then there was a scamper across the floor, and over her feet, and she screamed aloud and beat on the wall.

Silence for a minute. Then steps on the stairs; the door opened, and Miss Jones, with candle in her hand, entered the room. She was sterner than Dora had ever seen her before, and taking her by the hand led her down-stairs to a little room used sometimes as a spare room, and next the school-room. With some surprise Dora saw that her trunk stood there, and her books and little trifles were on the table near the bed.

"Go to bed," said Miss Jones, and Dora undressed hastily and crawled in.

Miss Jones stood looking at her, the stern expression giving place to one of real sorrow.

"Passion, even as reckless passion as yours, I could have overlooked and forgiven," she said, at last; "for, Dora, I did not know you were bad at heart."

Dora looked at her, wishing it were possible to blot out the morning's work.

"How could you do it, child?" said Miss Jones again. "How could you let yourself steal?"

"Steal!" and Dora started up in bed. "How dare you say I steal?"

"There," said Miss Jones, hardening again, "I ought to have known you would deny it. We will settle this in the morning," and, locking the door behind her, she left Dora with the dark and her thoughts.

CHAPTER VIII.

DARK DAYS.

DORA lay quiet, too stunned for a time to think. But as all this dreadful day came up before her, she cried again; not aloud, but with long gasping sobs, hard to see or hear in any child. Cried far into the night, till tears seemed all gone, and her eyes and head burned and throbbed. Sleep came at last, feverish and broken, which lasted far into the morning, till Hannah came again with another slice of bread and glass of water.

"You'd better get up," she said, "you'll be wanted pretty soon."

Dora got up and dressed herself slowly. The water felt very cold, and, looking out, she saw that snow was falling fast. She tasted her bread, but felt too miserable to eat, and sat down to wait for whatever might come.

The door opened soon, and Maria Baldwin put her head in.

"You're to go in Miss Jones's room," she said, and went away at once.

Dora went in, finding no one there, and sat down by the fire, glad of warmth, and drawing a little courage from it. She waited there what seemed to her an hour, though really but fifteen or twenty minutes. Then Miss Jones came in, followed by Miss Miller and Maria Baldwin, and all the little girls flocking after. If Miss Jones had come alone, Dora, sad and wretched as she was, might have talked the trouble all out; but the pleased look which Miss Miller tried to disguise, and the scorn on the faces of all the little girls but Cynthia, stirred her up once more into one of her silent rages, and as she looked steadfastly at Miss Miller, that young lady muttered, "Oh, you little serpent," and moved uneasily in her seat.

"As this is a public offense," Miss Jones began, "I have chosen to talk it over before those whom you have wronged the most. Your passion when found fault with, and the harm you did Miss Miller, though bad enough, are small

when compared with your other sin. A child who flies at people in that way should be muzzled like a dangerous dog. Why a simple bad mark should enrage you so, I cannot see."

"I had taken a book of hers," said Miss Miller, who thought a part of the truth might as well be told; and who knew Maria must bear witness against her if Dora spoke.

"What book?" said Miss Jones.

"A book she had been scribbling some very saucy things in," said Miss Miller, hesitatingly.

"Get the book," said Miss Jones, turning to Dora.

"You have no right to look at it," said Dora, now very pale, but determined. "I thought no lady ever read anything not meant for her to see."

"Get it at once," said Miss Jones, looking very angry.

"It was her journal," said Maria, who thought it time to interfere, "and nobody really had any business to touch it. I wouldn't have listened to it if I had thought."

"Her journal! And you read her journal to some one else?" Miss Jones said, sternly, turning upon Miss Miller. "Where did you get it?"

"In her drawer, under some things."

"I never imagined there was that degree of meanness in you," Miss Jones said, slowly. "You think because a child wrote it you were not bound to respect it. You are greatly mistaken. And you let her be punished as severely as if she had had no provocation. You deserve all the pain you feel. Go to your room, if you please, and think it over. Mind, I do not justify you for acting like a mad dog," she went on, looking at Dora. "But you were abused. She owes you an apology, and you owe her one. Are you ready to make it?"

"Yes, I am," said Dora, whose heart so swelled with pleasure at the justice done her that she longed to throw her arms around Miss Jones. "I was very angry when I bit you, Miss Miller, and I am sorry. I beg your pardon."

Miss Miller, as she walked from the room, gave a sort of grunt, which might mean anything; and Dora, with a heart lighter than an hour before she could have imagined it possible to be, looked at Cynthia, who nodded congratulations as if she would nod her head off.

"I wish this were all," said Miss Jones. "But

even after you have seen Mr. Thompson, and asked his pardon for the disgraceful conduct of yesterday, the worst remains still to be settled. Dora, when did you take Cynthia's cake from the closet?"

"I did not take it," said Dora, trembling, but determined to speak quietly if she could.

"Don't deny it," said Miss Jones, earnestly. "If you took it for the others, and then were tempted to eat it almost all, say so. Only tell the truth."

"I am telling the truth," Dora said. "Who said I took it?"

"The cake was gone last night, when I went to cut it up for tea," said Miss Jones. "When I found neither Hannah nor any of the family had seen it, I questioned the little girls, and Ida told me that, looking under the bed that afternoon for something which had rolled away, she found a great many cake crumbs at the back side where you sleep. I went in to examine, and found the remains of it rolled up in one of your handkerchiefs between the beds. And, worse than that, Dora, the little pencil I have missed three or four weeks, was with it. What have you to say to this?"

"She said she'd get it in the night," said Sippy, "because she wasn't afraid of the dark, and we were all going to have some. And then she pretended she wouldn't get it because it would be stealing. I heard her say she liked the pencil. Oh! I know all about her."

"No you don't then," said Cynthia, jumping up. "Dora Maynard didn't take that cake any more'n I did, or the pencil, either; and you're a mean, awful little sneak, Sippy Smith—that's what you are! Always listening, and lying, and snooping round. It's my cake, and I say there shan't be anything more said about it. Oh, dear! If anything could take me down I should think this would!" And Cynthia fell back and burst into a howl of grief, echoed by Ida and Dolly.

"You may go," said Miss Jones, hastily, while Dora, who felt as if she had no tears left, sat curiously quiet, looking at them all.

Miss Jones leaned back in her chair. She almost wished she had taken a different course. Yet the general feeling was that nobody but Dora could have taken the cake, and certainly no circumstances could be stronger. There was even a little bit of cake in the pocket of the dress she

had worn the day before. Putting the pencil with it was a strange idea, when there were so many better places where it could have been hidden.

"She looks innocent enough," said Miss Jones to herself, "and it would be dreadful if after all she should be accused falsely. But she is not, I am sure. Dora, if you would only tell me," she went on. "How much better to tell the truth, even if you have been wicked."

Dora was silent.

"Well," Miss Jones said, after a long pause, "I have no choice. I shall write to your friends and advise with them. In the mean time you need have nothing to do with the little girls. Learn your lessons, and exercise as usual, but without talking. And whenever you make up your mind to tell the truth, come to me, and I shall be glad to hear it. You may go now."

Dora went out, feeling more than seeing her way, and going into her new room, sat down. So that was the end! Her friends written to that she had been stealing, and all her trying gone for nothing. Mr. Osgood would think she had forgotten every good thing he had ever told her,

and as for her father—well, of course he would believe at once she had done that, or anything else that might be told him. There was no use in wanting to be good if this was what it ended in.

The door opened softly, and Dora saw Cynthia's tear-stained face looking in.

"Go away," she said.

"I sha'n't go away," said Cynthia. "I've got a cup of soup for you, and you've got to eat it. You have not eat a mite since yesterday morning, Hannah says. I can't stay, you know, but I don't believe you took anything. Drink it all up, every drop. Oh, you poor little thing!"

Cynthia hurried away, and Dora sat quietly till noon came, and the dinner-bell rang. Then bathed her eyes, and, trying to look as if nothing had happened, went down. Old Mr. Jones looked at her sadly, and she felt as if every one avoided meeting her eyes. Miss Jones talked as usual to the rest, but said nothing to her until after dinner, when she took Dora's hand and led her into the parlor.

"You showed right feeling in apologizing to Miss Miller, this morning," she said, "and I want

you now to do the same to Mr. Thompson, who is coming in here soon. He has done you no harm, and you disgraced the whole school in what you did to him. Are you willing to say the right thing to him?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Dora, faintly, and Miss Jones, with a "Very well," walked away and left her sitting there.

The door opened in a minute, and, looking up, Dora saw Mr. Thompson standing there, with an alarmed expression, as if he expected something to fly at him.

"Miss Jones is not here," he said. "I—"

"Mr. Thompson," Dora said, quickly, going toward him as he retreated, "I'm very sorry I threw anything at you. I didn't mean to hurt you. I'm very sorry."

"You ought to be," said Mr. Thompson, still backing. "Sinful passions like yours ought to be punished. Some one should whip you. I should do it myself if I were your teacher, and—"

The rest was lost, for, backing continually, Mr. Thompson had reached the kitchen door, and, leaning against it, it opened inward, landing him, to Hannah's surprise, on the kitchen floor, from

whence he arose convinced Dora had had something to do with his fall.

She, in the mean time, escaped up the stairs, and went into the empty school-room. Saturday afternoon no one went there who could help it, and now she sat down by a window, and, taking her book, looked over her lessons for Monday. She ran to her room again when she heard the little girls coming, and waited there till tea-time. Prayers and lessons, and the Saturday night's warm bath, gave her work till bed-time, and then alone in the little room she cried herself to sleep.

So days went by. Cynthia spoke to her whenever she could get a chance, and would have made many, but Dora kept by herself. As her grandfather had said, she brooded over things, and now she was determined to say no word which should tell how much she suffered. Thanksgiving went by, and a few days later Miss Jones called her into her room just before school-time.

"I have a letter from your father," she said. "You may read it if you can. It is short."

Dora opened it. There were only a few lines.

"DEAR MADAM: Your course toward Dora has been just right. No punishment could be too severe. Forbid her writing at present to her grandparents, and allow her no favors of any sort. If not too great a tax upon you, I should wish her to spend her vacation with you. Stern dealing is the only way to meet her tendencies.

"I am, very respectfully, yours,

"H. H. MAYNARD."

Only from Dora's eyes could any one have known the storm raging within. Miss Jones watched her as she read, wondering as she did now every day what should be done, but determined that Dora should be brought to confession. Every night she asked,

"Have you no word for me, Dora?" and every night the answer came,

"No, ma'am," till Miss Jones decided it was the worst case of obstinacy she had ever seen.

Going home had been all to which Dora could look forward. With March her troubles would end, for she felt sure grandfather would never let her return to a place where such charges had been not only made but believed. But now her father had cut her off from any hope of justice or comfort.

"He always did believe the very worst things he could," she said. "I hate him; I always shall hate him. I know I've told stories sometimes, but he thinks I do all the time. I'll do it to him. What's the use in trying to be good when he acts so?"

Dora could not understand the wound her father's pride, as well as honor, had received, or his eagerness by any means, sharp or otherwise, to cure her of the dreadful faults he believed were rooted in her. Like many another child, she thought fault-finding meant want of love, and felt injured whenever it came. But now it was more than injury, it was outrage, and she would not bear it any longer. Running away had come into her mind many times before, but had never seemed possible. Now she must get home if she walked all the way. Once at Wolcottville, there were trains to be taken, if she only had money enough. Dora went down before her trunk, and pulled out the bag of five-cent pieces, not very much lightened, for but little spending was allowed. There were over four dollars still, as she found after long counting, and in her purse were two gold dollars, sent her for

pocket pieces. This ought to be enough, she thought, and if it gave out she could walk, as David Copperfield had done.

She looked so much more cheerful when she went into the school-room, that the little girls thought either she had confessed and been forgiven, or the real thief had been discovered. Cynthia beamed as she saw the change, and from pure joy was so much more distracted than usual in her answers that Miss Miller finally ordered her back to her seat. But Miss Jones said nothing. Dora, too, was silent as usual, but with this new look, which certainly meant something. Miss Miller thought, "she has made up her mind to tell," and so did the older girls; and Ellen Woodland, full of sympathy, wrote on a bit of paper, "He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall find mercy."

Dora smiled as she read it, and pushed it back to Miss Woodland. Then a sudden thought coming to her, took it again, and wrote underneath, "And so He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be."

"What that has to do with it I can't see," Miss Woodland said to herself. "She is a strange child."

It was early in December, and the Starvation Club having been unable to carry out its original plans, had changed its name and become "The Santa Claus Relief Society," the object being to make presents for Christmas, and thus relieve Santa Claus from the burden of providing everything. Dora had looked forward to doing so much with both money and hands, but this afternoon, as she saw the collection of bright silks and worsteds, went by without a pang, and busied herself with making up a bundle of whatever she thought would be needed on the road. She took everything from her drawers and put into her trunk, leaving only some little light things about, so that no one would suspect her. She meant to go that night—walk the eight miles to Wolcottville, which was reached, she knew, by the road passing the house, and take the train which left there early in the morning, so she had heard, when in two days more at most she should be at home. Then if her father came after her, or insisted on sending her back to school, she would run away again; go into a factory; work for somebody. Anything but go back to school.

Do you think all this very unnatural, and feel

sure no girl of ten ever even thought long of running away, much less did it? I should agree with you if I had not known Dora all her life, and heard more than once the story of this miserable time, the memory of which will always be a very dark shadow in her picture of the past.

Dora looked about that night with a curious feeling, upon the people and things grown so familiar, and so soon to be left. She caught Cynthia as they passed in the hall, and hugged her tight, but said not a word. Miss Jones noticed the strange expression of her face, but set it down as more of her queer ways. So nine o'clock came. Good-night was said; lamps put out, and Dora, who went to bed with her clothes on, lay there waiting till everything should be still. It seemed to her half the night had gone, when, looking into the hall, she saw that Miss Jones's light was out. The full moon made everything stand out clear and plain as she looked from the window a moment; and then putting on her warmest hood and shawl, stole down the hall, with shoes in hand. The back door had only a catch inside, and could be opened far easier than the front one; and, with many pauses of terror at

creaking boards or sudden sounds, she reached the kitchen, put on her boots, which she would not stop to lace up, lifted the latch, and with one backward glance, she went out into the night.

At any other time nothing could have tempted Dora to be out alone at this hour; and even now, for a minute, her heart sunk and her knees shook.

"It's to get home! it's to get home!" she said. "I know God will take care of me. Oh, God! *do* take care of me!" And, saying this over and over, she hurried on. Nothing looked familiar in this shifting, uncertain moonlight, lost now and then under thick clouds, driving up from the north. She passed the road where they had gone nutting, with a dreadful fear that some wild animal might spring out upon her, and breathed freer as she came to open ground again. The thin crust of snow on the ground crunched under her feet, making her start and turn at times as she fancied some one behind her. The clouds thickened, and now she could barely see her way. Stray flakes of snow fell, and as the wind rose, came faster and faster against her face. Dora's heart almost failed her; but turning back was

worse than going on, and she walked steadily forward, with small idea of the weary miles that lay before her, and sure she was near the end of her journey. Up hill and down, growing more and more weary, and all the time the snow falling thicker and faster, till Dora, numb with cold, and straining her eyes to see through the driving storm, came suddenly against a fence. She got back to the road, but in another five minutes was out again; and now, for the first time, real fear took hold of her. She could have screamed, but did not dare to, as she vainly tried to see where she was going; and, stumbling and falling, kept straight on. How long this lasted she could not tell. She remembered afterward falling down some steep place, and calling loud as she crawled back, for her grandfather and mother, and then running wildly on till again thrown down by something. Then the sound of a horse's hoofs on the frozen ground, and with the howling of the wind, one more cry as she ran again from the path, and seemed to feel herself falling down, down, into darkness, and cold, and silence.

CHAPTER IX.

WATCHING AND WAITING.

UNCLE SOL had been to Watertown on business and, kept long beyond the proper time by an unpunctual friend, had sternly declined all invitations to stay all night, and driven away indignant. Whatever regret he may have felt as he cooled I do not know; but the cooling came soon enough, for the storm began not half an hour after he had started. Old Gray trotted briskly as twenty years of hard work would let him, and Uncle Sol, drawing the capes of his ancient coat over his head, chirruped and sung to keep his spirits up. They were curious old songs, known to his boyhood, with now and then a hymn or psalm, till as he got nearer home he struck into this:

"Why, soldiers, why
Should we be melancholy, boys?

Why! soldiers, why?
Whose business 'tis to die!
Whose business 'tis to die! to die, 'ie, 'ie!"

he shouted; then stopped both song and horse suddenly.

"That was a queer sound. Like a human critter hollerin'. Wonder if old Simmons has tumbled down anywhere with his stone jug? Might better be froze an' done with it, than go home to slam his wife and children round."

Uncle Sol drove slowly, trying to see through the darkness and driving storm, and listening carefully.

"It must 'a been a catamount," he said at last. "I've heerd 'em cry like that, times enough when I was younger. You'd think they'd a sick baby shet up in 'em. Now, there 'tis again, just ahead. 'Tain't an animal, that's certain."

Old Gray had stopped of his own accord, and, getting out from the sleigh, Uncle Sol tried to light the lantern he always carried under the seat. The wind blew out a dozen matches before he finally succeeded, and walked down the road, holding it first one side and then the other. A few rods on was a place where gravel had been

taken out, leaving a great hollow in the side of the hill, with a steep cut leading to it from the road, just wide enough for a cart. Down this steep place Dora had fallen, and Uncle Sol, holding his lantern out, saw a dark bundle at the bottom.

"Old Simmons, I declare!" he said, going toward it. "Now how'll I get him up? He's an awful lift. Here, git up!" he shouted, rolling over the object, and starting back with another shout of amazement, "Lord save us! it's a gal!"

Uncle Sol lost no time. In another minute Dora was in the sleigh, wrapped in the buffalo robes, and old Gray snorted as he felt the whip coming down more sharply than he ever expected. The three miles between them and home were gone over in racing time, and Uncle Sol leaped from the sleigh as if he were but twenty, and and carried the child into his own bed. 'Liphalet, nodding by the fire, opened his eyes at the confounding sight.

"Jump round lively, now, an' get the doctor here in no time," said Uncle Sol. "This gal's frozen, or dead, or somethin'! Off with you now!"

'Liphalet ran, and Uncle Sol pulled off the shawl and hood, and then sat down for a moment, too overcome to go on.

"That little gal that got shet in my cellar! Lord have mercy upon us! Out in the night! Dead, may be! If this ain't the curiousest world!"

But as he finished exclaiming, he went on pulling off the soaked boots and stockings, and rubbing her half-frozen feet with spirits.

"A bundle, too!" he said, as, lifting Dora higher on the pillows, he saw something clasped in her arms. "A reg'lar run away as ever was. Somethin's gone wrong. There always was queer doings in that school. There, now, pooty! Don't fret. Uncle Sol'll take care o' ye. Keep still, pooty."

Dora had sat up for a moment, looked about wildly, and then fallen back, moving her head uneasily from side to side. So she lay when an hour later the village doctor came in, with "I want to know?" written in every feature. 'Liphalet had roused him by shouting that there had been a murder, and Uncle Sol had brought home the body, or else the body had tried to murder

Uncle Sol, and then been brought home. In any case there it was, and a woman, too.

The doctor shook his head as, after examining her, he sat down by the fire.

"It's a bad case," he said. "She's got fever, and it's been coming on for some time. She'll be very sick. You'd better send her to the poor-house, Uncle Sol, unless you happen to know who she is."

"The poor-house!" repeated Uncle Sol, with scorn. "That's the way with you doctors; no more bowels of compassion than a grindstone. I know well enough who she is. Ain't certain I'm going to tell. Anyway, I'll wait awhile. She'd stay here, only I suppose some woman'd have to come to take care of her, and I won't have their clickety-clack around. You just fix her the way she ought to be, an' I'll settle the rest."

"She can't stay here, you know," said the doctor, after he had settled her comfortably in bed. "Wherever she's going, she must go by early morning or not at all. I'll give her a soothing powder now, and be in here again by seven. Keep her hot and covered up, and if she comes to herself don't frighten her off again," and, much wondering, the doctor went out.

Uncle Sol arranged himself for the night by tying a red handkerchief around his head, and then sitting down by the fire in his high-backed arm-chair, looked toward the bed where Dora tossed uneasily, moaning and muttering, and springing up often with a frightened cry. Each time Uncle Sol laid her gently down, and went back to his place, nodding something, but straightening up at once to his work. As morning came on slowly, the moaning changed into cries for help; for grandfather Winthrop; for Jack; for Mr. Osgood; and, when at seven the old doctor came in, he shook his head again, and said:

"It's no use to think of moving her. She's got to stay here, now, till it's over."

"You don't mean—" began Uncle Sol.

"I do mean it would kill her to be moved. Now, where are her friends?"

"'Liphalet, go up and tell Miss Jones she's to come to onct," said Uncle Sol, with a gasp. "She's one o' the school gals, Dr. Brown. Best stay till she comes. You're used to women folks' tantrums. Well, well, well! To think o' my house turnin' into a nest of sick babies!" And Uncle Sol retired into the back kitchen, and

leaving the door ajar, peeped through now and then, to see if his enemy had appeared.

At half past five that morning, Hannah, punctual to the minute, opened the door at the foot of the back stairs and walked into her kitchen, starting back as she saw the open door, and the drift of freshly fallen snow on the floor. Robbers were unknown in the quiet village, and though from habit she locked up at night, it did not occur to her that the silver might be missing.

"Now if it don't beat!" she said, as she swept out the snow. "To think I should a' forgotten to catch that hook. House'll be colder than a barn, with that wind driving in through it all night."

At seven o'clock the last bell rang, and the girls flocked down to the dining-room, and took their places.

"Dora has overslept again," said Miss Jones. "Go up, Cynthia, and tell her she can have no breakfast unless she is here very quickly."

Cynthia went, but returned in a moment.

"She isn't there, ma'am."

"Then look for her. Very likely she is in the school-room getting warm."

"If you please, ma'am," said Hannah, appearing with an angry face in the door-way, "Uncle Sol's boy is in the kitchen, and says you must come out right away."

"A very improper message," said Miss Jones, stiffly. "He must wait till I have breakfasted."

"I told him that, ma'am, but he said it was murder, and you'd got to come."

"If the murder is done there is no use of hurrying," said Miss Jones, believing herself the victim of a practical joke.

"'Tain't done," said 'Liphalet, who had overheard; and, indignant at the general disbelief, walked in to speak for himself, and turned all colors as he faced this battery of girls. "'Tain't done. Leastways it wasn't when I come over. But it's likely ter be soon. It's one o' your own gals picked up in the night, off to Wolcottsville."

"What do you mean?" said Miss Jones. "Are you mad?"

"No more'n you be," returned 'Liphalet, doggedly. "Uncle Sol said as you was to come right away, and the doctor says she's killed."

Miss Jones sat down, feeling deathly faint for a moment, but composed herself, as she saw the frightened faces of the girls.

"Be quiet," she said to Cynthia, who had sat down on the floor, and was rocking back and forth. "Miss Miller you will open school this morning, and see that things go on as usual. Dora is in trouble, and I may not come back for some hours. Be quiet, girls; this boy probably doesn't know what he's talking about. I shall let you know about it as soon as I can."

Miss Jones threw on a shawl and hood, and ran down through the snow, over the same path Dora had taken a month before, while 'Liphalet, swelling with importance, drank the cup of coffee Hannah gave him, and told all he knew, which was very little.

"It's the Maynard gal, anyhow," he said. "The doctor put her to bed, an' she's jumpin' round, and hollerin' for all sorts of folks. I reckon Miss Jones'll wish she'd kept her eyes open."

Miss Jones groaned as she waded through the deep snow. In all her experience with girls, she had never found so puzzling a case as Dora Maynard. She had tried heartily to do the very best thing, and now here was her school disgraced through no fault of hers; and yet every one

would say there must be very little attention given, when a girl could wander off in such a way. Perplexed and miserable, she opened the door of the little house she had never entered before, and went forward to the bed, where stood Doctor Brown, holding Dora as she tried to spring up. Uncle Sol, prepared for "tantrums," looked in cautiously, but as he saw her sit down quietly, gradually edged into the room, and stood looking at her.

"Most extraordinary thing I have ever known," said Dr. Brown. "One of your scholars, it seems, Miss Jones, picked up at twelve o'clock last night, half frozen, and three miles from here on the Wolcottsville road. In brain fever to-day. She'd have had that anyway, though," he added, pitying the distress in Miss Jones's face. "It must have been coming on some time."

"She must be moved at once," said Miss Jones.

"That's impossible. She would die on the way. She's got to stay here, and her friends must be sent for at once. The stage is going in half an hour, and you can send your telegraph by the driver."

"So long as it's got to be, it's got to be," said

Uncle Sol, "so make yourself to hum, Miss Jones. If I'd been set to choose my own crosses I wouldn't a picked out this one; but it's come, and that's the end on't. An', doctor, see here. Keep a close tongue in your head. There ain't no use in gabblin' it all through the town. Shet your gals' mouths, Miss Jones, an' I'll see to mine. 'Liphalet, I'll tan your hide if you go talkin' round among the neighbors."

"That's useless," said Miss Jones. "In a village like this, of course every one will know in a day or two, at most. Better anticipate them, doctor, and say that the child wandered off when the fever was coming on, and was picked up and brought here, where she must stay till better. It's a dreadful piece of work, but there's nothing to do but make the best of it. I shall stay here till some one comes. I wish you'd stop and ask Hannah to come down when she has got the dinner under way."

Hannah came by and by, and sat there, while Miss Jones went up to the house, told the girls how the case stood, and arranged to be away till some one arrived as nurse. Old Mr. Jones took her classes, and Miss Miller promised the best

possible attention to everything. That was a dreary three days. Dora grew no better; but, as she tossed from side to side, said continually:

"You know I didn't take it grandmother! you know I didn't take it!"

"If anybody else did it, and put it upon her, they deserve to be hung," Miss Jones said to herself, as she realized how it had worn upon poor Dora. "And I can't see any way of finding out."

"What does she say that for, all the time?" Uncle Sol asked, the second afternoon, as he sat by the window peeling apples.

Miss Jones hesitated, then made a sudden determination, and told him all the doings of the past few weeks.

"Things is agin her," said Uncle Sol. "They look dark, that's a fact. But she don't seem that sort. I'd sooner think that snoopin' critter of a teacher had had a hand in it. What do ye keep her for? That little yaller-headed, slantin'-eyed thing among the little gals don't look none too good. But it's a bad job layin' it to anybody, unless you know. This gal don't take things easy. I don't see what you'll do. I'll think about it a spell. School-keepin' ain't so easy,

after all, is it? Not nigh so much so as I thought."

"Easy!" Miss Jones sighed, as she listened for the bells of the stage, now almost due, and thought of the miserable meeting with somebody who would look upon her as the cause of all this sickness and trouble. She heard the jingle at the foot of the hill. Dora heard it, too, and said something about getting ready very soon, sitting up as she spoke, and looking round. Miss Jones laid her back on the pillows, and turned to see in the door-way a sweet-faced old lady, who went at once to the bed, while an old gentleman helped lift in a trunk.

"No need of explanations," he said, as Miss Jones came forward. "I saw the doctor below here, and he has told me everything. We shall take all responsibility, now, with thanks to you. You have done everything that could be done, and we appreciate it."

"The most perfect old couple," Miss Jones said, an hour later, as she lay down for the rest she had not taken for three days. "I don't wonder the poor child is always calling for them. They look good as angels. No boarding-school

in the land can take the place of such influence as comes from people like them, and her father was an idiot to separate them. I shall tell him so, too. People never can let well enough alone."

Christmas came. A sad Christmas for Dora, who still lay unconscious of everything about her; her long hair cut close, and her flesh wasting away with fever. Mr. Maynard came up, bringing a box of fruit—golden oranges and lemons, bananas and cool tamarinds. He staid only a day, finding himself utterly useless in a sick-room, and then left, asking that telegrams should be sent at least once a day. Cynthia came down as often as she was allowed, bringing in her train one and another of the little girls, and always crying so that Mrs. Winthrop dreaded her visits. The older girls came, too, offering to watch at night, and so did many of the neighbors. Only one never suggested going down, and that was Sippy, who seemed to shrink from even hearing Dora's name.

"I think Sippy's going to be sick, too," said Clem. "She screams in the night, and frightens me most to death, and she don't eat anything, hardly."

"She turns pale, too, when Miss Jones says

Dora isn't any better," said Ida. "And she said the other day she should give all her Christmas presents to her when she got well. She didn't use to like her, either. But then everybody likes her now, even if she did steal."

"Don't you say that!" broke out Cynthia, passionately. "It's more likely Sippy did it herself. You never'll make me believe Dora did."

"Well, if she did," said Maria Baldwin, soothingly, "it was because the fever was coming on. We don't any of us think she really meant to. Sippy Smith, how queer you look."

"Do I?" said Sippy, with a sickly sort of smile. "I was only thinking we'd never say anything more about it when she got well."

"Only to think of her going off in the dark, and that awful storm, too," Clem went on. "Why, I wouldn't dare have gone in the front yard."

"Yes you would, too," said Cynthia, "if you hadn't been spoken to for a month, and didn't care whether you was dead or not. Oh! I tell you I'm awful glad I never did anything ugly to her."

Ida looked disturbed, and Sippy stole away and was not seen again till study hour. The

prayer for the sick was read next day in church, and at evening Miss Jones came home in tears, and was locked in her room for some time.

"Girls," she said, when she came out, "the end has almost come. Dr. Brown does not think Dora can live through the night. Go to the school-room, all of you. I am going back, and will send up word how she is before bed-time."

"Let me go and just look at her," pleaded Cynthia. "I won't speak a word—only just look."

"No," said Miss Jones, after a moment. "It is not best. You shall all know by nine o'clock."

Cynthia sat down on the floor behind the stove in the school-room and cried bitterly, while the other girls, with hushed voices, talked a little of Dora, and at last sat silent, waiting for whatever word might come.

CHAPTER X.

THE TURNING POINT.

NINE o'clock came, and as soon after a well-known shuffling and stamping were heard on the kitchen steps, Miss Miller ran down to see 'Liphalet.

"She's a sinkin'," said he. "The doctor ain't certain whether she'll pull through the night or not. Likely not. Everybody here's to go to bed, Miss Jones says."

Miss Miller went back slowly.

"No change, girls," she said. "Now go to bed, and pray we may be forgiven for any hard thing we have ever said or done to the poor child."

Sippy ran to her room, and when, a few moments later, Clem followed, she found her rolling on the bed in an agony of grief.

"I can't bear it another minute," she almost screamed. "I can't live if I don't tell somebody."

"Tell them what?" said Clem, beginning to suspect the truth.

"I will tell," said Sippy, sitting up and looking at the knot of little girls who now surrounded the door.

"Go to your rooms, children," said old Mr. Jones's voice from without. "What is the trouble here?"

Sippy had thrown herself down among the pillows again, and, going in, he sat down by her.

"Now, Sippy," he said, "tell me your trouble. Why do you cry so?"

"Because I—because I put the things under Dora's bed. I put the cake in her pocket, and everything, and fixed it so't everybody would think she had taken it."

"I knew it! I knew it all the time!" said Cynthia, rushing in and shaking Sippy furiously. "Oh! you wicked little thing! And now she's dying, and won't ever know. I want to kill you!"

"Kill me then," said Sippy, wretchedly. "I don't care. I didn't mean to make her sick."

"Go away, all of you," said Mr. Jones, looking very much shocked; and Cynthia, almost beside

herself with indignant pity, shook her fist as she went from the room.

"Oh! if she was a boy, and I was a boy," she said, "wouldn't I lick her good! I've a great mind to do it, anyway. I'll never come back to this school, unless Miss Jones sends her away."

"She feels dreadfully," ventured Ida.

"*Feels* dreadfully! What's that. Anybody can feel dreadfully. Why didn't she feel like telling the truth when it might have done some good? not snivel it out when it can't be told to the right one. If Dora dies, I hope she'll haunt her all the days of her life."

"There, there, Cynthia," said Miss Miller, "there's no use in feeling so. Sippy needn't have told if she hadn't chosen."

"Oh, it's like you to talk that way!" said Cynthia, turning upon her. "You think I don't know much, Miss Miller, and don't care for anything but eating. I'd rather be a hog than act like you, or Sippy Smith either, driving the poor thing crazy between you. Oh, get out!" and Cynthia ran into her room and shut the door.

Mr. Jones came out after a time, the shocked look still on his face, and walked down to Uncle

Sol's. No one had gone to bed, but sat there waiting for whatever might come. The doctor sat by the side of the bed, feeling Dora's pulse now and then, and grandfather and mother were on the other. Mr. Maynard, who had come up the day before, sat near the window, looking steadily into the darkness, and Uncle Sol crept about, mending the fire, which sent up strange flickering shadows over the walls and low ceilings. Dora lay motionless and quiet in a sleep whose ending would be life or death. Mr. Jones beckoned to his daughter, who stole out softly, wondering why she was called.

"It comes too late to do much good," he said, "but if she dies, and is conscious at all before the end, you can tell her that we all know she did not commit the sin laid to her charge. Mississippi Smith has confessed that she is the guilty one."

Sippy would have trembled could she have seen Miss Jones's darkening face.

"Lock the little wretch up till I can attend to her," said she. "Poor Dora! poor little Dora! What we have made her bear among us!"

"You did what seemed best," said her father, soothingly, "and need not reproach yourself. Try and rest to-night."

"I can't rest," said Miss Jones, as she went back to her post, and sat watching for any change in the pale little face, only a shadow of its former self—watched with as earnest a prayer as she had ever prayed, that the child might at least live to know their sorrow for the wrong she had suffered.

The night wore slowly away, and at last a pale gray dawn came up in the east. Dora stirred uneasily, and Mrs. Winthrop bent over her, and watched the heavy lids which seemed unable to lift. Dora turned a little, then opened her eyes wide, with the first conscious look in them for a fortnight, and smiling feebly, but with full recognition, whispered "grandmother!" and slept again.

Dr. Brown drew a long breath. "She'll do," he said, softly, and went into the back room. "I'm going home for a nap," he said to Miss Jones, who followed him, "and do you go too, or I shall have you on my hands next. She's passed the crisis, and with careful nursing will come out all right."

"Thank God," said Miss Jones, with a burst of tears, which she checked in a moment and turned

to Mrs. Winthrop, who came out more overcome with gladness than she had been by all the long watching.

"Go home, my dear, and rest," she said to Miss Jones. "You have more children than one to think of."

Miss Jones wanted to give her good news, but could not before Dr. Brown, and went away to sleep a long sleep of exhaustion.

Grandmother, too, lay down for a little rest, while grandfather and Mr. Maynard still kept watch by the bed-side; and Uncle Sol, going out to the barn, danced, for the first time in forty years, a double shuffle on the threshing-floor.

Of the talk with Sippy I shall not tell you; but Cynthia saw with delight the thunder-cloud on Miss Jones's face as she entered the room, and chuckled as she heard the loud sobs which greeted her. But she relented at tea-time, when Sippy, pale and trembling, was led in, and begged forgiveness of the whole school for her mean and wicked conduct.

"No," said Miss Jones, as she paused before her, "I do *not* forgive you yet. It will take more than a little crying to make me do that.

Impulsive, thoughtless sins I always forgive; but deliberate, mean, sneaking wickedness like yours I do not. I should expel you on the spot, but shall wait till Dora is well enough to say what shall be done with you. And whatever she says shall be done, if it is to tie you up and whip you."

Sippy jumped as Miss Jones brought her hand down on the table with an energy that made the cups dance. She would gladly have stayed in her room. Anything would have been better than to see the little girls look another way when she came near, and never speak unless obliged to. With equal dread she looked forward to the time when Dora should be told, and counted the days as they slowly wore away.

For Dora's convalescence was a long one, and it was nearly a month before she could sit up with comfort. As soon as possible her father had told her that everybody knew now that she had never stolen, and how sorry he was for her long punishment; but Dora had either forgotten, or was too weak to feel much curiosity, or even ask who had done it. She could not understand why Uncle Sol should be there, but accepted the fact, and smiled on him whenever he came near.

It was pure comfort to wake up from long sleeps, and see grandfather and mother, one or the other, always close at hand; but everything else seemed a sort of dream, and why Uncle Sol, and Cynthia, and the rest should seem so familiar, she puzzled herself to find out. Memory came gradually, but it was not till one morning in February, sitting up in Uncle Sol's rocking chair before the open fire, that she said suddenly:

"Grandma, where's my journal?"

"In my trunk, dear."

"Did I give it to you?"

"No, dear, I put it there for safe keeping. Do you want to look at it?"

Dora was silent for a time, then spoke again.

"Then it didn't get lost out, when I fell down that night. Did you know I was out in the dark and the storm, grandma?"

"I know all about it," said Mrs. Winthrop, quietly, afraid that she would grow too much excited. "It was a very bad dream, dear, but it's all over now."

"And they know who took the cake and the pencil?" said Dora, after another silence. "Who was it?"

"One of the little girls, my dear. I have not seen her. Mississippi Smith is her name."

"And she said wickeder things than anybody about my stealing," said Dora, flushing hotly. "I'll never forgive her as long as I live."

"Hity tity!" said Uncle Sol, coming in with a red apple, which he set down before the fire to roast for Dora. "Never's a long day. I don't blame you for bein' mad. That's nat'ral and proper. But you mus'n't keep mad. Forgive us our debts, you know, as we forgive our debtors. It's a big debt that air yaller-headed torment owes you, but you'd better kind of pass it over."

"Ah! but Uncle Sol," said Dora, "You never had such hard times as I've had. People doing you harm, when you hadn't done anything to them."

"Haven't I?" said Uncle Sol, slowly. "Well, you know, I suppose. I kind o' thought I had. Anyway, you'd better think awhile before you make up your mind. She don't look none too happy."

"Cynthia," said Dora, the next day, "I want Sippy to come here to-morrow. Do you believe she will?"

"She's got to, whenever you are ready," said Cynthia. "You can have her expelled, if you're a mind to. Miss Jones said so."

"Did she," Dora answered, thoughtfully. "Well, after she's gone back, I want all the girls to come down here together, and Miss Jones, too. You can tell her, if she doesn't come here again to-night."

"Well," said Cynthia, wondering, but asking no questions, and the next afternoon Sippy crept in looking "like a whipped yaller dog," Uncle Sol said afterwards, and stood before Dora, who had arranged beforehand that nobody should be in the room with them.

Mrs. Winthrop stayed close by, ready to come in if Dora grew too excited; but the talk, though long, was a very quiet one, and Sippy went away with a comforted look on her face.

"The girls needn't come, I guess," Dora said, as she crept into bed again. "I don't want to talk any more, only to tell Miss Jones that Sippy's going to begin again, and nobody must ever say a word to her about stealing. I know how it feels when you haven't done anything, and it must be a great deal worse when you have.

You'll tell her, grandma, every word, won't you? and that she must be good to Sippy, and help her along."

Miss Jones thought over the matter, and that evening just before tea, while Sippy was in her room, told the girls Dora's wishes, and added her own.

"This is her last chance with us," she said. "She seems really repentant, and we will give her a fair trial. I shall treat you as if nothing had happened," she added to Sippy at bed-time. "But you are not to forget that you owe it to Dora, and that if you offend again, you leave at once."

During all this time, as Dora grew better, she had asked many questions of Uncle Sol, and heard the full history of the curious old things about the room, even down to the patch-work quilt upon the bed, which had in it two pieces from one of Mrs. Washington's gowns.

"That quilt don't naterally belong to me," Uncle Sol said. "It was part of Nabby's setting out, and that ere piece o' chintz come to her from one o' father's cousins from Virginny, that knew all about the Washington family. I keep

it rolled away, mostly, but now's as good a time as any to have it out."

They were all sitting, as he spoke, around the fire. The early tea had been cleared away by Mrs. Winthrop, the one woman in the world really good for something, Uncle Sol said every day. And seeing his tender, gentle ways with Dora, Mrs. Winthrop wondered often how it was that no woman had ever shared his life. Practically he needed none; for no woman could have exceeded his neatness in every way. Spotless cleanliness reigned in every corner, and his bread and doughnuts were light and puffy as heart could desire. Butter making, preserving, all were done by himself alone, 'Liphalet only having charge of the cattle.

"Who was Nabby?" Dora asked.

"My sister, child. The only one I had. There were nine boys, and only this one gal. She was goin' to be married, but died o' small pox before the day come—died in the pest-house, and couldn't even be buried from home. Mother kept her settin' out a good while, and when she found I was settling down here, give it to me. Nabby an' me was nearest."

"Why didn't you marry somebody, and have her live here with you?" Dora asked.

Grandmother Winthrop started, fearful that the question might offend him. But Uncle Sol, after one keen look at her, turned to the fire again.

"I did calkilate to," he said, "but things went contrary. I'd a knocked anybody down that asked me that question forty years ago; but I've mistrusted sometimes o' late years that may be I might a done different. 'Tain't no use to talk about it now."

"Yes it is," said Dora, earnestly. "I want you to tell me, Uncle Sol."

"Well," said Uncle Sol, bending forward, with his elbows on his knees, and looking intently into the red coals, "she an' Nabby were thick together as could be. Always in an' out, in an' out, an' I, seein' her every day, fell in love like a fool an' gin her my word. I'd a good trade—carpenter and house builder, (my father was one before me)—an' it came handy, for I could build a house, and furnish it, too. An' the best friend I had was a parson. Knew everything that I didn't, an' was way above me, but took to me, somehow,

an' learned me all the little I knew. Him an' Dolly was friends, too, and she'd talk to him about things she never did to me. Notions like that come into her head. Well, well! We was all young together. Then come the war. He wasn't no great for liberty, being a parson; but my folks was all brave fighters, an' four of us boys went in to onct, an' I reckon they'd have all gone if they'd lived; but you see three or four died when they was small, and Ephraim was far gone in consumption then.

"Well, we went, and I says to parson Simmons, 'Now, I leave Dolly with you, an' whatever little things I've done for her, I want you to do when I'm gone. If I die, she's to have the little I've laid up; an' if I don't, please God, I'll come home an' marry her.'

"Dolly acted like a Tory, out an' out, but I thought it was because it hurt her so to have me go, an' marched away heavy-hearted enough, but kind of hoping all the time to come back. I tell ye it was worse'n any wound I ever got, fur I was just tied to that little thing; but I couldn't hold back when every man was wanted. If it had been stiddy fightin' it might a' done, but

then at last they kept me prisoner going on three years, first in the prison ship, an' then when I was taken again, in the old sugar house. I could kill every Britisher now, when I think of them three years. Not a word of home, an' thinking they might all be dead.

"Well, it ended, an' I crawled home, eaten up with sores, an' my head turned white, though I wasn't thirty years old; went home to find Simmons had cut me out, and Dolly married him afore I'd been gone a year. I'd a killed him if he'd been there; but he knew better. He'd gone off where he belonged, among the Tories in Nova Scotia, an' that was the end o' them. An' of me, too. I kind o' broke down then, more'n even the prison had made me, an' looked to die anyway. Got so near dyin' I could forgive Simmons easy. But when I began to pick up it all came back, an' I says to myself, 'Now, Sol, you've been taken in by one woman, don't you ever give another the chance. If she'd lie, they all will, an' don't you never have anything to say to one of 'em but your own mother, that hain't no object in deceivin' you.' An' I haven't. Fifty years an' more I've lived here, by myself till late

years, when I've had a boy or two, and this little creetur's the first petticoat I'd have been willin' to let come and go as she was a mind. I'm free to say they ain't all light-headed, an' if I'd found one like you, ma'am, things might a' been different. 'Twon't last much longer, anyway."

"Is she alive?" said Dora, wiping away some tears. "I hope she had an awful time."

"She died forty year ago," said Uncle Sol. "I'm seventy-nine. She'd a' been seventy-seven if she'd lived. Well, I don't bear malice now. Folks don't when they're as close to the grave as I be."

"Uncle Sol," said Dora, after a long silence, "I'm going home as soon as I'm well enough, to stay till next term begins. I wish you'd come and see us, and see how nice it is."

"I wish you would," said Mr. Winthrop, heartily. "We have lived with you a month and more. Now come and live with us."

"No; I'm obleeged to you," said Uncle Sol, looking much gratified. "I ain't fit to be anywheres but here. But I shall remember you asked me. The first asking I've had since 1800 came in."

"Fifty years without being asked anywhere," Dora murmured, as grandmother tucked her up in bed. "That's worse than not getting married."

CHAPTER XI.

BY THE FIRELIGHT.

A FEW days more, and Dora was strong enough to be taken in the doctor's sleigh back to Miss Jones's, which she was soon to leave, not being well enough to think of, studying, for a long time to come. Uncle Sol protested that she might far better start from his house; but Miss Jones was anxious that she should have a few days there, that she might take away pleasanter memories than might otherwise have stayed with her. So Dora sat in state in the school-room, or in the great arm-chair down-stairs, waited upon with such devotion by everybody, that Mrs. Winthrop said she would be spoiled. Five of the most promising kittens, grown now almost into cats, were brought in from the barn, and allowed to be wherever they could best entertain her. Unfortunately, accustomed merely to calls from

the little girls, and not to a continuance of polite society, they refused entirely to stay in, and ran for the barn whenever a door was left open.

Ned Seymour, whose calls at Uncle Sol's had been constant, came now with his sister, fearing to face Miss Jones alone, and Franky Kinnicutt left each morning the largest red apple he could find. Cynthia, in the highest spirits, stumbled over her lessons with perfect equanimity, and only groaned at being kept in because it kept her from Dora; and Sippy, quieter and humbler than anybody had ever seen her before, worked away, seeming determined to make the most of her "chance."

Miss Jones allowed them now to linger in the dining-room after tea, for this room Dora liked best of all, because of the open fire, with its bright brass andirons and wire fender. It was delightful to sit down on the rug, with her head in grandmother's lap, and talk or listen to the little girls, who clustered about her. Even Mrs. Jones allowed them to set apples down to roast on the hearth, without a word as to its "mussing up everything so," and as they watched them they told stories or made plans for the next term.

Only one day now, before Dora would leave, and once more they were all about the fire. Ned and Frank had come in, and though at first disposed to run from the crowd, settled down at last on the hearth, and listened to Mrs. Winthrop, who had been telling a fairy story, and went away now for a time, leaving the children to themselves.

"Well, this isn't a very stiff boarding-school," said Ned, presently, putting some chestnuts down to roast. "You ought to hear Franky's brother, George, talk about his. Why, you can't wink without being marked for it. There's one teacher there, the one in composition and that kind of stuff, that's always looking out for a chance to ferrule you. George says one day last summer it was awful hot, and the flies buzzing so you couldn't hear yourself think, and Mr. Bruce seemed as if he could not sit still, he felt so peppery. George had a spool of just the finest kind of silk in his pocket. I guess he bought it a-purpose. Anyway, he caught all the big flies that came along, and tied a long string of this silk to their legs, so't they could only go just so far. Then they buzzed like fury, and Mr. Bruce

flapped round with his handkerchief, and said such a noise was perfectly unbearable. But George got come up with, for one of 'em, with a longer thread than the rest, flew and lit on Mr. Bruce's forehead, and the silk lay just over his nose and tickled it. He was cute enough when he brushed off the fly to keep hold of the thread and went right down by it to George's desk. Wasn't he hopping, though?"

"George was the hoppingest," said Franky, "for he took it on both hands."

"Like that man in 'Mother Goose'," said Dora, "'When he whipped them he made them dance out of Ireland into France.'"

"They couldn't," said Cynthia, literal, as usual. "There's a sea between."

"That's the first bit of geography Fatty ever remembered," said Ned, after the shout had gone down. "You're coming on, Fatty. You'll get a diploma some day."

"I'll tell you something," said Franky. "George is in love, and I know all about it, too. I heard him talking to Jack Adams about it. Jack goes to the same school. He's in an awful scrape, too."

"How?" said all the little girls, interested at once.

"Why, this girl went to dancing-school, and she's the prettiest one there is anywhere about. Long curls, you know. George has got a piece of one, and little specks of feet, and George danced with her a lot, and thought everything of her. But after a while another fellow came—not a bit better looking than George, only he put lots o' grease on his hair, and wore patent leather pumps—and this girl (I don't know her name) danced with him right away, and wouldn't hardly look at George. So George greased his hair like everything, and put a little on his handkerchief to make it smell first rate, you know. You needn't say 'Oh!' Dolly Baldwin. What's the odds whether it's grease or cologne, so long's it smells the same? But you see he hadn't any pumps but calf-skin ones, and mother wouldn't send him the money for any, because she said his old ones were good enough. And every time he asked this girl to dance, she'd look down at his feet, an' then say, 'No, I thank you. I'm engaged.'

"Well, he was down at the shoemaker's one

day, getting some strings, and this fellow came in with his pumps that had a little split in the side, an' he wanted them done right away, because that night was dancing-school night. Old Tim said he'd hurry; but when he was off for something, George just put 'em in his pocket, and walked home, cool as a cucumber. Tim couldn't find 'em anywhere, and vowed to the feller that he couldn't have left them, and that made him so hopping he said Tim had stolen them. Then Tim knocked him down, and rolled him out into the snow. George didn't care, 'cause he was a mean kind of a feller anyway, and he danced with the girl that night, and crowed it over the other fellow like everything; told her about his being knocked down, and all. But you see next day when he went back with the pumps, old Tim happened to see him slip them kind of sly into a roll of leather, and was mad as could be when he found out about it. And the worst of it was, he'd lost one of 'em on the road, and couldn't find it anywhere, and now he's got to pay for a new pair. He got a licking from old Bruce, and now father says he's got to earn the money."

"Boys wouldn't have half so hard a time if

they were only a mind to behave," said Cynthia. "They're always breaking rules and doing things they've no business to, and then they scold and make a fuss."

"Well," said Ned, "it's a great deal easier for girls to be good than it is for boys."

"It isn't! It isn't!" was the indignant answer.

"Oh! yes it is. Why, you take kind of naturally to being proper, and all that. You don't see a boy prinking and whisking, the way Sip—, well the way lots of girls do when they come into church."

"Well, boys do such lots of mean things," said Cynthia. "They steal like everything. Why, a boy thinks it's all right to go and steal a poor woman's apples, and a girl wouldn't do such a thing for the world."

"Well, that's just what I said," went on the unabashed Ned. "All the boys do things. But I tell you one thing—they don't tell half so many mean little lies as girls do. Girls lie all the time. I mean," he added, in haste to silence the chorus of angry voices, "I mean little fibs, you know, about each other's looks, and everything."

"Well, I guess the badness is pretty well mixed up in both of 'em," said Cynthia. "But I'd just like to know why it's stealing for me to go to Miss Jones's closet and eat her preserves, and good fun, and a fine thing for you boys to march off to a melon patch and nearly kill yourselves."

"Well, I don't know," said Ned, reflectively, "only it's sort of handed down from generation to generation, you know. I bet you a shilling, Dora, your grandfather stole apples or something, when he was a boy."

"He never did," answered Dora, instantly. "He wasn't that kind of a boy, at all."

"Yes, he was," said Mr. Winthrop, who had come in unperceived, and was followed in a minute by grandmother. "At any rate, I came very near being. I remember very well some doings of mine in grandma's melon patch."

"Oh! well, then you had a right to them," said Dora, cheering up. "Everything of hers is yours, too."

"No, I hadn't," said Mr. Winthrop, "and no it wasn't, then. She was only Theodora Allen then, and not Theodora Winthrop for ever so many years after, and her father was the village doctor.

I was studying then, with three or four other boys, at the minister's, getting ready for college, and every one of us was dead in love with pretty Dora Allen. Not so much in love, though, but that we had an eye to her father's melons, any number of which were growing in his garden. He kept no dog, and one or two pickets were broken out from the fence at the back, and as his land joined the minister's, the two places being back to back, it was a very easy matter to slip through and find out how the melons were coming on. I felt a little mean once in a while, after I'd spent an evening and had a good time with Miss Dora, to sneak through the fence and try those melons; but I did it, for all that.

"Well, one dark evening in August, not late at all, we saw the doctor drive away, and decided now was the time. So Gray and I went through, picked half a dozen melons, and crawling back again, sat there on the wood pile and ate all we could hold, throwing the rinds into the pig-pen. They didn't taste half as good as I expected. In fact, I wished I had had nothing to do with it; and after we had been in our rooms a while, when one of the boys proposed going after some root

beer, I agreed at once. Wanted to drown thought, you see. So we started out, and went around the corner, our road taking us right by the doctor's. There he stood, in the door, and called out:

"'Good evening, young gentlemen!'

"'Good evening,' I said, feeling very shaky, and Gray nudged me and said:

"'Do you suppose he can possibly know anything about it?'

"'Good evening, young gentlemen,' the doctor repeated, walking down the path. 'Walk in, won't you?'

"'No, thank you,' said I, as nobody else spoke, 'I don't believe we had better, to-night.'

"'I really must insist upon it,' said Dr. Allen, taking hold of my arm with a tight grip, which seemed to me to mean mischief. 'Walk right in. We have some remarkably fine melons, and I know boys are partial to them. Come right in and help yourselves.'

"He pulled me along as he spoke, and of course the other boys followed. As we went in at one door, the servant came in at another, carrying two splendid water-melons on a waiter, while Dora stood there with plates and knives.

"'Eat away!' said the doctor, cheerfully. 'I know there's no end to what a boy can stow away, and you won't find these bad eating,' and he cut enormous slices, and passed to each of us. We were so full it seemed as if one more mouthful would choke us, and yet felt that we must eat, for how could we account for not doing so? Melons were a great luxury, and he knew it, and I put down my slice the best way I could, having another put on my plate the moment that was gone.

"'I really can't, doctor,' I said. 'Melons don't agree with me very well. I'm not quite well now,' and I caught my cap and ran. How the rest got out, I don't know; but I was sick all night, and so were they.

"From the quizzical look in Miss Allen's eyes, I knew she knew something about it, but I could not imagine how her father had found out. But the more I thought of it, the more ashamed I got, and at last I determined to go and tell him how I felt. It was about the worst job I ever did, but he met me more than half way. I jumped when he asked me where the difference between me and a thief came in, and if there was any;

but it was a good lesson. I told it to my own boys, and now I tell it to you for the same reason."

"But how did he find out?" said Ned.

"He had only driven his horse a little way down the road, to an old barn he used while his new one was building, and came back at once. He heard a rustle in the garden, and went out to find that we were close to his fence, and eating his melons. Then he determined what to do, and would have come round for us if we had not passed. We supposed he'd think the carpenters had taken them. More trickery and cheating, you see. I often think the mean, dishonorable business men grow up from these melon and apple-stealing boys, though a good many may do it thoughtlessly."

Ned looked as if his attention were wandering, and no wonder, for within the last five minutes one little girl after another had stolen out, and now both Ned and Frank rose up suddenly and rushed to the door, bursting into a wild laugh before it had fairly closed.

"I don't think they're very polite," said Dora, rather insulted. "I don't think anybody is. I

should like to know what they mean by laughing at you like that, grandpa? The last night I'm to be here, too."

As she spoke, the parlor door opened, and Miss Jones beckoned to them. Much bewildered, Dora went forward and sat down among the little girls, while a shawl hanging in some mysterious way from the ceiling, was pulled aside, and showed a village choir; a leader with pitch-pipe; somebody with big bass viol, who looked like—no, it couldn't be; yes, it certainly was—Uncle Sol! There were two young ladies in costumes such as Dora had seen in the attic at home; enormous bonnets, with ribbon trees growing out of them, and dresses with waists up under their arms. But the wonder of all was, Uncle Sol, smiling at Dora, and drawing most unearthly wails and groans from his instrument.

"I got him," said Ned in an explosive whisper. "He would not have come if he hadn't been coaxed out of his wits."

"Do, me, sol," piped the leader. "Now begin. Do, ra, me, fa, sol."

"Do, ra; do, ra; do, ra," repeated the choir.

"Go on; go on," said the leader, exasperated.

But "do, ra, do, ra, do, ra," and nothing else sang the choir. Uncle Sol stamped, and played the whole scale in a series of howls, but still the obstinate choir sang "do, ra," and nothing more, and the curtain fell on the leader throwing his pitch-pipe at the tallest young lady's bonnet, while Uncle Sol played furiously some unknown tune, his white top-knot wagging in time.

"It's a charade," said Ned, for charades in those days were very uncommon things, and Dora might be forgiven for not understanding at once what the new play could be. "It's a charade that you're to guess, and my mother fixed it."

The curtain went up again, or rather aside, and showed a pole decked with wreaths of paper flowers and evergreens, around which the same party danced, till interrupted by somebody who announced himself as from Maine.

"From Maine I come, but a Henglishman I ham, and it does my 'art good to see the old country customs kept up. A 'ard country is Maine, an' 'arder it would be if I couldn't take a little comfort out of it."

By this time a whisper went about that the

word was two, and could be nothing else than Dora Maynard; but Dora herself had no such suspicion, and was overwhelmed with confusion when Mr. Jones stepped forward, and leading her up in front presented her as "the whole word, ladies and gentleman."

Everybody cheered and clapped, and Dora went back to her place with burning cheeks, but rather enjoying it on the whole. The grand feature of the evening over, the girls begged for games, and played a half a dozen whose names you hardly know—pillows and keys, fox and geese, and lastly Copenhagen. Dora held the forfeits, as the quietest share she could have in the fun; and finally identifying a red silk handkerchief as Mr. Jones's, declared that he must tell a story to redeem it. Uncle Isaac blushed harder than Dora had done, and declared he knew none; but, finding the judge inexorable, sat down and began:

"It's a little story, and a very ridiculous one, too, but all I can think of, good people. You know, Mary," he went on, turning to his daughter, "that I began at one college and graduated at another; but I have never told you why I left

the first. The fact is I was so wild there was no living with me anywhere, and got not only myself but everybody else into continual scrapes."

The children looked at the mild, soft-voiced old gentleman, wondering if this could be true, and with a little smile he went on:

"Half the energy spent on mischief would have taken me through with the highest honors. I wonder sometimes if college boys now do as many outrageous things as we did. Chapel was the worst infliction, going to morning prayers before it was light, and we tried pretty much everything to get rid of it, even to climbing the belfry and muffling the bell, so that it took the ringer an hour to unroll the rags. Of course there was no chapel that day, but the president marked us all for absence, and not only that, but kept it up for a week, till we vowed to be revenged. His only amusement was driving about, and he had a really fine horse; gentle but fast, and answering to his name like a dog. He was kept beautifully groomed, too, and his coat looked like satin. Well, we had been outraged by old Prex, as we called him, long enough, and determined to be even with him. So one night, having made our

plans beforehand, we went into the stable three or four of us, and painted that horse in stripes of red and green, giving his tail a final dip in the green. We couldn't get the effect by dim moonlight, but just did it on general principles; and when we were through, sunk our paint pots in the creek, and went to bed. The howls and stamping in that stable next morning, when Pat went in! He led the animal right out in front of the president's house, and I guess it was the most extraordinary looking creature that ever walked through the streets of that town. The faculty smelled it out, though I never knew how, and three of us were expelled at once. We deserved it, too."

Uncle Isaac ended with much applause, and then Miss Jones, who saw Dora looked tired, turned to Mrs. Winthrop:

"Only one thing more," she said, "and then Dora must go to bed. You are wanted this way, Dora," and rising she led the way to the dining-room.

CHAPTER XII.

THE END.

SUCH a sight as the opening of the dining-room door disclosed had seldom been seen at Miss Jones's, where "goodies," as the little girls called them, were rather looked down upon.

But to-night the usual rules had been departed from. Cynthia's eyes were rounder than ever, as she pointed out a cake in the centre of the table and informed Dora that it was for her alone.

"Chock full o' raisins and citron!" she said. "My mother made it, and I know. You've got to take it home with you, and eat it every mite yourself."

"Then you must eat all my mottoes," Dora said, recognizing some beauties sent up by her father.

Miss Jones looked as if she wanted to say:

"Now, children, don't make yourselves sick,"

but did not say it; and Cynthia was allowed to cut from another cake slices equally "chock full" of fruit, and distribute them among scholars and guests. Dora, easily tired, crept away to bed before the supper ended, and finding Uncle Sol in the kitchen, stopped to give him a final hug. Uncle Sol's eyes were dim, and his voice a little broken, as he held her for a minute in his arms, and said:

"Now, pooty, you're coming back again."

"To be sure I am," said Dora; "and I know something, Uncle Sol, that nobody else does. Miss Miller isn't coming back. I heard Miss Jones tell grandma so; and she said she had tried her faithfully, and found she would never answer to be with children. What'll I do without somebody to plague me?"

"You'll plague yourself fast enough," said Uncle Sol. "Let you alone for getting yourself into scrapes. Now, you go to bed an' sleep like a pictur'! You needn't say good-bye, coz I'm going to drive you over to-morrow."

The parting next day was rather a sad affair. Cynthia, dissolved in tears, declared that "this would take her down, if anything could"—though

as all the winter's troubles had produced no effect in that way, it was doubtful if this would. Ned and Franky brought each a bag of nuts, and were disconcerted at Dora's refusal of them.

"Why, I'm going where there's nothing but nuts," she said. "I mean, there's more than Jack or I ever could eat, if we cracked all the time. And, Ned, I want you to write to me, and tell me about George, you know, and if he earns money enough to buy the pumps. You can write to Jack and tell him, if you don't want to write to a girl."

"I guess I can stand it," said Ned, rather envying a girl's privileges, as Dora was passing around like smelling-salts from one to another. Then, as she was tucked into the sleigh, and Uncle Sol touched up old Gray, he sprang on the runner, planted a kiss on the tip of her nose, and ran off, followed by Franky.

Miss Jones looked severe for the benefit of the little girls, but smiled for her own, as she ordered them all to the school-room; and, with a feeling that everything interesting had gone out of their lives, they went back again to the old work.

"I don't feel as if it were I that am going

away," Dora said, at last, some time after they had passed the spot where she fell on that miserable night, when Uncle Sol had found her. "It seems just as if I had left the Dora that used to be at school or somewhere, and this was a new one going home. I can't tell what I mean. I'm the same, inside; and yet I'm different."

"I know," said grandfather. "A good many such times have come in my life, after dreadful sorrows, and even great joys, when it seemed to me there was nothing left of the old Winthrop, and I had all to begin again."

"I know all about it," said Uncle Sol; "and I'm getting to think a life ain't good for much that ain't mostly upsets. It don't hurt a man to get pretty nigh the ground, so long's he picks himself up an' goes ahead; and it kind o' puts him on his dander when the Lord lays him out every now an' then, an' he has to fight to get into the kingdom. Feather beds ain't the best things to git to heaven on."

"That must be one reason why Miss Jones won't have them," said Dora, with a little laugh.

"Now, Miss Jones," said Uncle Sol, "she's a straight, stiff kind of a woman enough—older'n

her ma this minit, and full o' cranks as an egg is o' meat; an' she was the wildest gal there was in the town, an' a handsome gal, too, an' laughin' the whole time, till her trouble come."

Grandfather coughed a little, to warn Uncle Sol that perhaps his revelations might better not be made before Dora; but Uncle Sol went on:

"Her lover was drowned, you know, going over to England. He was to marry her when he come back, an' she was making her weddin' fix-ins. It pretty nigh killed her, they said; but she held her head up, and never give in. She's turned some good women out o' that school o' her'n, if she is cranky."

Dora sat quiet, trying to imagine Miss Jones young and gay and in love, and thinking that this knowledge might help her another term in bearing more patiently any small aggravations that might arise from her sharp tongue. That was a short ride: and it was hard to say good-bye to Uncle Sol, who stood over her to the last, with tears in his eyes. Dora looked back as the train moved away, and saw him still standing, the same quaint old figure she had seen in the village church, her first Sunday there, but looked at it with such different feelings.

"It's queer how you don't know anything about somebody," she said, "and then all at once think a great deal more of them than may be you do of people you have seen all your life."

And grandfather said, "It is queer."

That night they spent in New Haven, for the journey was to be divided up as much as possible, to make it easier for Dora, and the next day started for Springfield, intending to stay a day or two with an old friend of Mr. Winthrop's. The snow fell heavily all night, but stopped in the morning; and the sun shone brightly when they went down to the depot. Before they reached Hartford it began again; and the train moved more and more slowly as the time went on. Dora had found company in a little girl of three or four, going to Springfield with her brother, a boy of fifteen or sixteen, who was certainly one of the nicest boys ever seen, she thought; for he not only took care of the child as gently as a woman, but told her stories, and amused her as if he really enjoyed it.

Dora offered little Helen, as she heard her brother call her, an orange, which won her heart at once, and very soon they were all talking to-

gether like old friends, so busily that they hardly noticed when the train stopped. But when no signs of moving on appeared, Harry opened the window and put his head out. An unlucky piece of work, for a gust of wind, apparently waiting for just such a chance, took his hat off and whisked it away, nobody could tell where.

"Well, upon my word," he said, "what shall I do now? That's a pretty job!"

Grandfather opened his bag, and took out a soft traveling-cap.

"I always carry this to nap in," he said, "and you are welcome to it. You live in Springfield, don't you? Well, I shall stay there over Sunday, at Judge Andrews's, and you can bring it there. I'll give you the street and number."

"I don't believe you need to," said the boy, laughing. "I'm Harry Andrews, and Judge Andrews is my grandfather. Mother's been sick, and Helen was sent to aunty's in New Haven, and I went after her yesterday. How queerly things happen!"

Dora thought so, as the afternoon wore away, and going on became still more impossible. They were only two miles from a large town, but might have been twenty for all the good it did.

A few of the gentlemen left and struggled through the deep drifts, intending to bring back sleighs and take off all the passengers. But this proved to be impossible. Such a storm had not been known for years. All they could do was to telegraph for more snow plows, and then give their minds to keeping warm. Of course the wood gave out in a very short time, but there were plenty of fence rails, which the brakemen chopped up. Fortunately, there was no baby on the train, little Helen coming more nearly under that head than anybody, and she looked upon it as a good joke. It was, to her, who had unlimited crackers and ginger snaps, but less so to many who were without lunch, and who might be kept hungry and waiting the whole night.

Mrs. Winthrop made up a bed of shawls and wrappings on two seats, and tucked away Dora and little Helen, who slept comfortably as if at home, but it was a hard night for the rest.

Toward morning the storm lulled, and by seven o'clock snow plows had arrived, and they were moving along at a snail's pace to the next station. Here they went to a hotel and breakfasted, deciding to stay till the road was open,

and telegraphing to Judge Andrews that his grandchildren were safe and in their charge; and here they stayed till Monday morning came, with warm, cloudless sky, and bright sunshine, which was fast turning the drifts into puddles.

Dora enjoyed heartily their two days in Springfield, going all over the armory with Harry, and finding to her great amazement that he was the boy whose patent leather pumps had excited such rage in George Kinnicutt's mind.

Sitting in the library, Harry had said carelessly:

"So you've been at Edgefield at school? There's a fellow from there at ours—George Kinnicutt."

"Why, do *you* know him?" said Dora.

"Of course I do. I ought to. He played a trick on me, and old Bruce flogged him for it."

"They weren't *your* pumps!" exclaimed Dora.

It was Harry's turn to look astonished.

"They were my pumps; but I can't see how you know anything about it."

"She's got long curls," said Dora, mischievously; "but I don't believe she's much of a girl, to stop dancing with George just because you were better looking."

"George is a great one, to go and tell you all about it. I should have thought he'd have kept it to himself."

"O, he didn't tell me. I found it out. I find out a great many things."

"Tell me how," urged Harry, but in vain, for not a word more could he get from Dora, who confounded him by relating at full length one or two performances he had supposed to be strictly private.

"Oh, well," he fumed, at last. "Of course you know somebody that goes there?"

"I don't," said Dora. "I never saw anybody that went there, till I saw you."

"Well, I'll find out, you may depend," Harry said, but failed to keep his word, and knew nothing about it till he returned to school, when George admitted having told his brother, who probably had told her.

The rest of the homeward journey was successful, and just a week from the day she left Miss Jones's, Dora ran up the steps and into the old house, met at the door by Mr. Osgood and Jack. This last named young gentleman was greeted with some dignity, which he resented at once.

"I didn't think you'd come home all stuck up," he said, severely.

"I'm not stuck up," answered Dora. "I never shall be; but I do think you're a mean boy, Jack Winthrop. You were going to write to me, and you haven't once. Ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

"You didn't write to me but once."

"Well, I couldn't, because Miss Jones wouldn't let me. But you didn't have anything else to do."

"Didn't I, though?" said Jack. "You just wait till you come up to your room, and I guess you'll find out."

"I'll go now," Dora said, promptly, suiting the action to the word, and stopping a moment to hug Dilly, who looked at her with tears in her eyes.

"Bless the child," she said. "She ain't anything but eyes and bones. Oh, this boardin'-school business isn't what it's cracked up to be. An' you're growed right out of everything. You're going to be tall like all the Winthrops."

"Then I shall be tall too," said Jack. "I'd like to be a regular giant, an' go round exhibit-

ing. Then I'd build a splendid house with the money I made, an' you could come and live with me, Dora. Now what do you think about my having nothing to do?" and Jack threw open the door of Dora's room with a flourish, and stood one side to watch the effect.

Everything seemed unchanged, save that a little soapstone stove stood under the mantel, from which came a soft, delightful warmth; but as Dora went in, on a table by the door appeared a gorgeous tin house, from the window of which a gray squirrel put his head, while his mate whirled in a wheel at the side.

"Now, anybody can have squirrels in a cage," said Jack; "but just you look a' here!" and opening the cage door, he took a lump of sugar from his pocket and held it in his mouth. Both squirrels ran out, hesitating a moment as they looked at Dora, then running up to Jack's shoulder, perched there and nibbled the sugar from his lips.

"Now hunt for it, Billy," Jack said, putting the lump in his pocket; and the larger squirrel, nosing about, soon found it, and perching on the window sill began to eat, while Jenny, the smaller one, scolded as she found there was none for her.

"I never saw anything so cunning in all my life," said Dora, flying at Jack and putting her arms around him. "Are they the squirrels that bit you so?"

"The very ones," said Jack, complacently: "and I tolled 'em out at last with sugar into the big rat trap, an' shut em up in an old cage. This is a new one your father sent, and I earned part of the money to pay for it. I've had the awfullest time taming 'em. They've bit me all to pieces, but I didn't care. You ought to see 'em run into grandpa's dressing-gown pockets for nuts. An' they're both for you, Dora."

"I shan't take 'em both," said Dora, decidedly. "I'll keep one and you the other. That's a great deal the nicest way;" and she ran down to tell her delight to grandmother. How good all the old ways seemed! And best of all, to sit in the big chair in Mr. Osgood's room, and go over all the troubles and pleasures of that four months at school. Four years at least it seemed, lengthening out as all time does into which much experience has been crowded.

The squirrels soon grew to know her as well as Jack, and followed her about everywhere. Dilly

declared she should kill them, because they gnawed holes in everything, and cut short many pieces of mischief by promising both children squirrel-pie for dinner.

Dora surprised herself by almost wishing at times to be at school again, or that the most desirable little girls could be with her. She wrote a long letter to Uncle Sol, and in due time received an answer, which altogether overwhelmed her, beginning as it did with "Honored maddam," and ending, "Your humble and obedient servant, Solomon F. Perkins."

Also came one from Cynthia, written in large round text, and evidently carefully overseen by Miss Jones;—so carefully that there was not an interesting word in it. But a week or two later came one bearing every mark of originality, and punctuated with blots. And as it gives some details you may like to know, I copy it here.

"deer dora," it began, "I now take My pen in hand to let you know I am in Helth, and hope you Are enjoying the same blessing. I miss you so I donte know what to Do, and none of us do. Miss Jones acts just the same, but Miss Miller scolds all the time, and we hate her Worse than

ever. Sippy acts real good, but she fell down stairs yesterday and cut her head, and Miss jones keeps her tied up in a wet towel. Miss Miller is going to Marry Miss betsey if he ever gets to Preaching anywhere, but you mustn't tell I told you. I gess nobody knows but me, but I saw them sitting on the sofer, and his Arm around her, and she said her father would not be willing yet awhile. Ain't it awful. Franky says george has whitewashed the hen-house, and is going to black his father's botes to get Munny to pay for those Pumps. I think it is too Bad. Was my Cake Good. I want you to write to me, a long letter.

"Your respectful Frend

"CINTHIA ALMIRA BOSTWICK."

So Dora's school-days ended, as far as this book is concerned. Whether you ever hear more of them or not, depends on how well you like what I have already written; but should you want to know more of her life and all she thought and did, I may some day give you other chapters.

THE END.

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